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NCW Haggard



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HANNIBAL'S DAUGHTER

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Hannibal's Daughter

BY

LIEUT. COL. ANDREW HAGGARD, D.S.O.

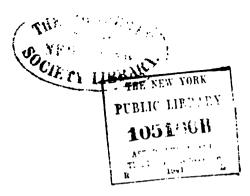
Author of "Tempest Torn," "Under Crescent and Star," etc., etc.

LONDON HUTCHINSON & CO.

PATERNOSTER ROW

1898

40





Dedication.

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS LOUISE, MARCHIONESS OF LORNE.

Madam.

Surely never, in the history of the world, have events more romantic been known than the career of Hannibal and of his eventual conqueror, the youthful Scipio. Therefore, under the title of "Hannibal's Daughter," it has been my humble effort to present to the world in romantic guise such a story as may impress itself upon the minds of many who would never seek it for themselves in the classic tomes of history.

Having been commenced on the actual site of Ancient Carthage, the local colouring of the opening chapters may be, with the aid of history, relied upon as being correct. Throughout the whole work, moreover, the thread of the story has been interwoven with a network of those wonderful feats that are so graphically recorded for us in the pages of Polybius and Livy.

To Your Royal Highness, with the greatest respect, I have the honour to dedicate my work. Should there appear to be aught of art in the manner in which I have attempted to weave a combination of history and romance, may I venture to hope that a true artist like Your Royal Highness, of whose works the nation is justly proud, may not deem the results of my efforts unworthy.

I have the honour to be,

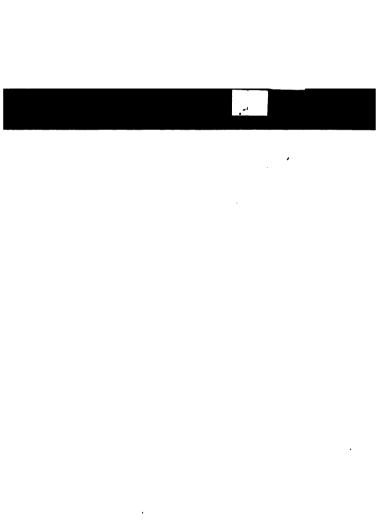
Madam.

Your most obedient servant.

ANDREW C. P. HAGGARD.

Alford Bridge, Aberdeenshire, May, 1898,

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PART I.

CHAPTER I.

HAMILCAR.

On a point of land on the Toenia, a hundred paces or so to the south of the canal connecting the sea with the Cothon or double harbour of Carthage, stood a palatial residence. Upon the balcony, which ran completely round the house on the first storey, stood a man gazing steadily across the gulf towards the north-east, past the end of the Hermæan Promontory, to the left, of which the distant Island of Zembra alone relieved the monotony of the horizon. His face was grave, and his short hair and beard were slightly grey, but he was evidently a man from whom the fire of youth had not yet departed. eye was the eye of one born to command; his straight-cut, sunburned features told the tale of many campaigns. Near him. on a stool covered with a leopard skin, was carelessly thrown a steel helmet richly incrusted with gold, and with the crest and the crown deeply indented, as if from recent hard usage, golden crest was in one place completely divided by a sword cut, the brighter colour of the gold within the division plainly showing that the blow had been but lately delivered. On the floor of the balcony, at the foot of the stool, lay a long straight sword. Although the hilt was of ivory, and the scabbard of silver inlaid with gems, the blood-stains on the former and the

absence of many of the gems from their sockets, told that this was no fair-weather weapon for state occasions, but a lethal blade which had been borne by its owner in the brunt of many a combat. Only, the armour which the warrior wore—consisting as it did merely of a bright steel breast-piece, upon the breast of which was emblazoned in gold a gorgeous representation of the sun, the emblem of the great god Baal or Moloch. and the back of which was similarly inlaid with the two-horned moon, the attribute of the glorious Astarte. Oueen of Heaven. and further studded with golden stars, the emblems of all the other and lesser divinities-seemed on first appearance as if more intended for the court than the camp. A closer examination, however, revealed the fact that this also was no mere holiday armour, for it, too, bore severe marks of ill-usage. The warrior's arms were bare from the elbow downwards, save for a couple of circlets of gold upon each wrist, which from their width seemed more intended for defence than ornament. Beneath the armour he wore a bright toga of pure white cloth, the lower part falling in a kilted skirt below the knee, being adorned with a narrow band of Tyrian purple. Upon his feet he wore cothurns or sandals strongly attached with leather thongs, the thongs being protected with bright chain mail. Some steel pieces for the protection of the thigh and knee were lying close at hand.

Such was the attire of the great General Hamilcar Barca, as with an ever-deepening frown upon his anxious brow, he gazed sternly and steadily in deepest reverie across the sea.

At length his reverie seemed to be broken.

"Why gaze thus towards Sicily," he muttered; "why dream of vengeance upon the hated Romans, who now occupy from end to end of that fair isle, where, for many years, by the grace of Melcareth, the invisible and omnipotent god, I was able with my small army of mercenaries to deal them so many terrible and crushing blows?

"Have they not almost as much cause to hate and to dread me, who did so much to lower their pride and wipe out the memory of their former victories? Did I not brave them for

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years from Mount Ercte, descending daily like a wolf from the mountain crest, to ravage the country in front of their very faces in strongly-fortified Panormus, from the shelter of whose walls, for very fear of my name, they scarcely dared to stir, so sure were they that their armies would be cut to pieces by Hamilear Barca?

"Did I not firmly establish myself in Mount Eryx, half-way up its slope in the city on the hill, and there for two years, despite a huge Roman army at the bottom, and their Gallic allies holding the fortified temple at the top, snap my fingers at them, ay, laugh them to scorn and destroy them by the thousand? For all that time, was not their gold utterly unable to buy the treachery of my followers—were not their arms utterly futile against my person? Did they not indeed find to their cost that I was indeed the Hamilcar my name betokens—him whom the mighty Melcareth protects?"

Proudly glancing across the sea with a scornful laugh, he continued:

"Oh, ve Romans! well know ve that had not mine own countrymen left me for four long years without men, money, or provisions, Sicily had even now been mine. Oh, Prætor Valerius! what was thy much boasted victory of the Œgatian Islands over the Admiral Hanno but the conquest of a mere convoy of ill-armed cargo vessels, whom mine economical countrymen were too parsimonious to send to my relief under proper escort. Where was then thy glory, Valerius? thou, too, Lutatius Catulus? how did I receive thy arrogant proposals that my troops should march out of Eryx under the yoke? I, a Hamilcar Barca, march out under the voke!" The General's swarthy cheek reddened at the thought. "Did not I but laugh in thy beard and lay my hand upon this sword—which I now lift up and kiss before heaven," he raised and kissed the blood-stained hilt. "Did not I, even as I do now, but simply bare the well-known blade," here he drew it from its sheath, "and thou didst fall and tremble before me, and in thine anxiety to rid Sicily of me didst willingly take back thine insult and offer to Hamilcar and all his troops the

full and free liberty to march out with all the honours of war? Ah!" he continued, stretching forth his sword menacingly across the sea, "for all that it hath been mine own countrymen who were the main cause of my downfall, I yet owe thee a vengeance, Rome, a vengeance not for mine own but for my country's sake, and, with the help of the gods, in days not long to come, those of my blood shall redden the plains and mountains of Europe with the terrible vengeance of the Barcine sword."

The General returned his sword to its sheath with an angry clang, then striding across the wide balcony to where it overlooked a beautiful garden on the other side of the house, he shouted loudly:

"Hannibal, Hannibal!"

There was no reply, but down beneath the shelter of the fig trees Hamilcar could plainly perceive three little boys engaged in a very rough game of mimic warfare. They were all three armed with wooden swords and small shields of metal. One of them was up in a fig tree and striking downwards at the head of one who stood upon the crown of a wall; while the third boy, who stood below the wall, was striking upwards at his legs. The din of the resounding blows falling upon the shields was so great that the boy at first did not hear.

"Hannibal, come hither at once," cried out his father again in louder tones.

Looking up and seeing his father, the boy on the wall threw down his shield, a movement which was instantly taken advantage of by each of the two other boys to get a blow well home. He did not, however, pause to retaliate, but crying out, "That will I revenge later," threw down his sword also and rushed into the house and up to the balcony, for even at his early age the boy had been taught discipline and instant obedience, and he knew better than to delay. He appeared before his father all out of breath and with torn clothing. Notwithstanding that his forehead was bleeding from the result of the last cut which had been delivered by the boy in the tree, he did not attempt to wipe the wound, but with cast-

down eyes and hands crossed over his breast, silently awaited his father's commands.

"What wast thou doing in the garden, Hannibal?"

"Waiting until Chronos the slave could take me up to see the burnt sacrifice to Baal of the mercenaries whom thou hast conquered," he answered—then added excitedly, "Matho, who murdered Gisco and his six hundred after mutilating them first, is to be tortured, thou knowest, oh, my father, Chronos told me so, and I am going to see it done."

Hamilcar frowned.

"Nay, it is not my will that thou shalt go to see Matho tortured and burnt; now, what else wast thou doing down there?"

The boy's face fell; he did not like to be deprived of the pleasure of seeing Matho tortured first and burned afterwards, for, boy as he was, he knew that if ever man in this world deserved the torture, that man was this last surviving chief of his father's revolted mercenaries.

But he made no protest at the deprivation of his expected morning's amusement, answering his father simply.

"I was playing with my brothers Hasdrubal and Mago at thine occupation of the City on Mount Eryx, oh! my father. Mago was up in the tree and represented the Gauls who had deserted and joined the Romans. Hasdrubal was down below and took the place of the Roman Army."

"And thou wast in thy father's place between the two, and like thy father himself, hast been wounded," replied Hamilcar, smiling grimly. "Come, wipe thy face, lad, and tell me why didst not thou, being the strongest, take the part of the Romans at the bottom of the hill?"

Fiercely the youth raised his head, and, looking his father straight in the face, replied:

"For two reasons, my father. First, I am much stronger than Hasdrubal, and the war would have been too soon over; secondly, I hate the Romans, and for nothing in the world would I represent them even in play."

"Ah! thou hatest the Romans! And wilt thou then fight them one day in earnest and avenge the torrents of Carthaginian blood they have caused to flow, the hundreds of Carthaginian cities whose inhabitants they have put to the sword; avenge, too, our defeat and loss of forty-one elephants before Heraclea; the sacking of Agrigentum and enslavement of 25,000 of its citizens; the terrible loss of three hundred warships at Ecnomos; the invasion of Carthaginia by Regulus; his sacking and burning of all the fair domain between here and Clypea, across yonder Hermæan Promontory; the capture by Cœcilius Metellus before Panormus of 120 elephants from Hasdrubal, all of them slaughtered in cold blood as a spectacle for the Roman citizens in the Roman circus; the fight at—"

"Stop, father, stop!" cried the young Hannibal, stamping his foot. "I can bear no more. By thy sword here, which I can even now draw—see I do so—I swear to fight and avenge all these disasters. By the favour of the great god Baal, whose name I bear, I will wage war against them all my life as soon as ever I am old enough to carry arms."

"Good," said his father, "thou art a worthy son of Hamilcar, and this very day shalt thou swear, not in the bloody temple of Moloch, but in the sacred fane of Melcareth, the god of the city, the god of thy forefathers in Tyre, and the god of the divine Dido, the foundress of Carthage, that never wilt thou relax the hatred to the Romans thou hast even now sworn by thy father's sword. Never shalt thou, whilst life lasts thee, cease to fight for thy native city, thy native country. Look forth, my lad, upon all thou canst see now, and say, is it not a fair domain? Let all that lies before thine eyes now sink down deep into the innermost recesses of thy memory, for soon I shall take thee hence; but I would not have thee, when far away, forget the sacred city for whose very existence thou and I must fight. When thou hast gazed thy fill upon all that lies before us, thou must perform thine ablutions, arrange thy disordered dress, and then thou shalt accompany me, not to see the sacrifice of the mercenaries in the pit of fire before the brazen image of Moloch, but to make thy vow in the temple of the invisible and all-pervading mighty essence of godhead, the eternal Melcareth."

CHAPTER II.

CARTHAGE.

THE terrible war, known as the inexpiable or the truceless war. was just at an end, after three years' duration. cenaries who had served so faithfully under Hamilcar in Sicily had by the bad faith of the Carthaginian Government, headed by Hamilcar's greatest enemy, Hanno, been driven to a revolt to try and recover the arrears of pay due to them for noble services for years past. When the effete Hanno, after a first slight success, had allowed his camp to be captured, the Government, at the last gasp, had begged Hamilcar to fight against his own old soldiers. For the sheer love of his country, he had, although much against the grain, consented to do so. But the towns of Utica, the oldest Phœnician town in Africa, and of Hippo Zarytus were joining in the revolt; the Libyans and Numidians had risen en masse to join the revolutionists, and the Libyan women, having sold all their jewellery, of which they possessed large quantities, for the sake of the revolted mercenaries, there was soon so much money in the rebel camp that the very existence of Carthage itself was at stake. Therefore, although Hamilcar well knew that all the mercenaries, whether Libyans or Ligurians, Balearic Islanders, Greeks, or Spaniards, were personally well disposed to himself. he had been forced to take up arms against them.

Under Spendius, a Campanian slave, and Matho, an African in whom they had formerly placed great trust, the rebels had gained various successes, and, on visiting them in their camp, had treacherously made prisoner of Gisco, a general in whom they had previously expressed the greatest trust, and whom they had asked to have sent to them with

money to arrange their difficulties. Hamilcar had been at first much hampered by his enemy, Hanno, an effeminate wretch, being associated in the command with himself; but when the Carthaginians found that, by leaving Hanno to hamper Hamilcar, with all these well-trained soldiers against them, they had got the knife held very close to their own luxurious throats, they removed Hanno, and left the patriotic Hamilcar in supreme military command. Their jealousies of him would not have allowed the aristocracy and plutocracy to have done so much for the man whom they had deserted for so long in Sicily had they not known their own very existence to be at stake. For they ran the risk of being killed both by the Libyans and mercenaries outside, and by the discontented people inside the walls.

When Hamilcar assumed supreme command, the war had very soon commenced to go the other way. He forced the easy, luxurious Carthaginian nobles to become soldiers, and treated them as roughly as if they had been slaves. And he made them fight. He got elephants together; he made wonderful marches, dividing the various rebel camps; he penned them up within their own fortified lines. deserted and joined him; many prisoners whom he took he released; a great African chief named Naravas came over to his side. All was going well for Carthage when Spendius and Matho mutilated and murdered the wretched General Gisco and his six hundred followers in cold blood. After that no more of their followers dared to leave them for fear of the terrible retaliation that they knew awaited them. But how Spendius and all his camp were at length penned up and reduced to cannibalism, eating all their prisoners and slaves, how Spendius and his ten senators were taken and crucified, while Matho, at the same time issuing from Tunis, took and crucified a Carthaginian general and fifty of his men, and how at length, after slaughtering or capturing the 30,000 or 40,000 remaining rebels, Hamilcar took Matho himself prisoner, are all matters of history.

On the morning of the opening of our story, there was to be

a terrible sacrifice offered up to the great Baal Hammon, the sun god Moloch, the Saturn of the Romans: the terrible monster to whom in their hours of distress the Carthaginians were in the habit of offering up at times their own babies, their first-born sons, or the fairest of their virgins, whose cruel nuptials consisted not in being lighted with the torch of Hymen, but in being placed bound upon the outstretched, brazen, red-hot hands of the huge image, from whose arms, which sloped downwards, they rolled down into the flaming furnace at his feet. And fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, yea, even the very lovers of the girls, looked on complacently, thinking that in thus sacrificing their dearest and their best to the cruel god, they were consulting the best interests of their country in a time of danger. Nor were the screams of the victims, many of whom were self-offered. allowed to be heard, for the drums beat, the priests chanted, and the beautiful young priestesses attached to the temple danced in circles around, joining the sound of their voices and their musical instruments to the crackling of the fire and the rolling of the drums.

When Hamilcar bid his boy, Hannibal, look forth upon the city before him, on the sea in front and behind him, and upon the country around, it was a lovely morning in early summer. The weather was not yet hot; there was a beautiful northwest breeze blowing down the Carthaginian Gulf straight into the boy's face, tossing up little white horses on the surface of the sea, of which the white-flecked foam shone like silver on its brilliantly green surface. Across the gulf, upon whose bosom floated many a stately trireme and quinquireme, to the east side arose a bold range of rugged mountains with steep, serrated edges. Turning round yet further and facing the south. the young Hannibal could see the same mountain range, dominated by a steep, two-horned peak, sweeping round, but gradually bearing back and so away from the shores of the shallow salt water lake then known as the Stagnum, now called the Lake of Tunis. This lake was separated, by the narrow strip of land called the Toenia, from the Sirius Carthaginensis,

or Gulf of Carthage, upon the extremity of which is now built the town of Goletta. There was in those days, as now, a canal dividing this isthmus in two, and thus giving access for ships to Tunis, a distance of ten miles from Carthage, at the far end of the Tunisian lake.

Turning back again and looking to the north and northwest, Hannibal saw stretching before him the whole noble City of Carthage, of which his father's palace formed one of the most southern buildings within the sea wall. Close at hand were various other palaces, with gardens well irrigated and producing every kind of delicious fruit and beautiful flower to delight the palate or the eve. Here waved in the breeze the feathery date palm, the oleander with its wealth of pink blossom, the dark-green and shining pomegranate tree with its glorious crimson flowers. Further, the fig, the peach tree, the orange, the lemon, and the narrow-leaved pepper tree gave umbrageous shelter to the winding garden walks. Over the cunningly-devised summer-houses hung great clusters of blue convolvulus or the purple bourgainvillia, while along the borders of plots of vines gleaming with brilliant verdure. clustered, waist-high, crimson geraniums and roses in the richest profusion. Between these palaces lay stretched out the double harbour for the merchant ships and war ships, a canal forming the entrance to the one, and both being connected with each other. The harbour for the merchant ships was oblong in shape, and was within a stone's throw of the balcony upon which the boy was standing. The inner harbour was perfectly circular, and surrounded by a fortification; and around its circumference were one hundred and twenty sets of docks. the gates of each of which were adorned with beautiful Ionic pillars of purest marble.

In the centre of this cup, or cothon as it was called, there was an island, upon which was reared a stately marble residence for the admiral in charge of the dockyards, and numerous workshops for the shipwrights. All were designed and built with a view to beauty as well as utility.

For that day only, the clang of hammers had ceased to be

heard, and all was still in the dockyards, for there was high holiday and festival throughout the whole length and breadth of the City of Carthage on the glad occasion of the intended execution, by fire, of Matho and the remaining rebels who had not fallen by the sword in the last fight at Tunis.

Tust beyond the war harbour, there was a large open place called the Agora, and a little beyond and to the left of it Hannibal could descry the Forum placed on a slight elevation. It was a noble building, surrounded by a stately colonnade of pillars, the capitals of which were ornamented in the strictly Carthaginian style, which seemed to combine the acanthus plant decoration of the Corinthian capital, with the ram's horn Between the pillars there stood the curves of the Ionic style. most beautiful works of art, statues of Parian marble ravished in the Sicilian wars, or gilded figures of cunning workmanship of Apollo, Neptune, or the Goddess Artemis, being the spoils of Macedon or imported from Tyre. The roof of the Forum was constructed of beautiful cedar beams from Lebanon, sent as a present by the rulers of Tyre to their daughter city, and no pains or expense had been spared to make the noble building, if not equal in grandeur, at any rate only second in its glorious manufacture to the magnificent temple of Solomon, itself constructed for the great king by Tyrian and Sidonian workmen.

A couple of miles away to the left could be seen the enormous triple fortification stretching across the level isthmus which connected Carthage, its heights and promontories, with the mainland. This wall enclosed the Megara or suburbs, rich with the country houses of the wealthy merchant princes. It was forty-five feet high, and its vaulted foundations afforded stabling for a vast number of elephants. It reached from sea to sea, and completely protected Carthage on the land side. Between the city proper and this wall beyond the Megara, everywhere could be seen groves of olive trees in richest profusion, while between them and the frequent intervening palaces, were to be observed either waving fields of ripening golden corn, or carefully cultivated vegetable gardens, well supplied with running streams of water from the great aqueduct which brought the

water to the city from the mountains of Zaghouan sixty miles away.

To the north of the Forum and beyond the Great Place, the city stretched upwards, the width of the city proper, between the sea and the suburbs, being only about a mile or a mile and a half. It sloped upwards to the summit of the hill of the Byrsa or Citadel, hence the boy Hannibal, from his position on the sea level in rear of the harbours, was able to take in, not only the whole magnificent coup d'ail of palaces and temples, but also that of the high and precipitous hill forming Cape Carthage, which lay beyond it to the north, whose curved and precipitous cliffs enclosed on the eastern side a glittering bay, wherein were anchored many vessels of merchandise.

The summit of this mountain was, like the suburbs of the Megara to the west of the city, studded with the rich country dwellings of the luxurious and ease-loving inhabitants of Carthage.

But it was not on the distant suburbs that the lad fixed his eager gaze, it was on the gleaming city of palaces itself. Here, close at hand on the right, he could see the temple of Apollo with its great golden image of the god, gleaming between the open columns in the morning sun. Further away appeared the mighty and fortified buildings of the temple of Ashmon or Æsculapius. To the left of the city the fanes of Neptune. Diana, and Astarte glittered in the sun, while occupying the absolute centre of the town, and standing apart in a large and now crowded open space, was clearly visible the huge circular temple of the awful Sun god-Saturn, Baal Hammon, or Moloch. The drums and trumpets loudly sounding from the vicinity of this temple, and the wreaths of smoke winding up between the triple domes plated with solid gold, told that the terrible sacrifices had already begun. Indeed, the yells of execration of the myriads of brightly-robed populace, most of them women, as victim after victim was dragged forward by the priests and thrown upon the dreadful sloping arms of the god, a sight Hannibal could easily observe between the rows

of columns, often nearly drowned the blare of the trumpets and the rolling of the drums.

Well, indeed, might they scream, these women of Carthage, for owing to the cruelties and massacres of those upon whom they were now wreaking their vengeance, all who had been their husbands or lovers were gone. There were now scarcely any men left. Thus they saw themselves condemned either to a perpetual virginity, with no hopes of ever knowing the joys of motherhood, or fated at the best to a share with many other women in the household of some rich and elderly noble, since polygamy had been recently decreed as a means of repopulating the State. All the young men remaining alive. Hamiltar had enrolled in his army, and although a few of the more luxurious and ease-loving might leave him and remain in Carthage, that army was, so rumour said, about to start with him and the flower of Carthaginian manhood for unknown battle-fields, whence it was improbable that they would ever return. Thus, the older women screamed and velled with fury at the loss of husbands or sons, and the young women screamed with rage at the loss of the once possible husbands, who never had been and never could be theirs. Yet, all alike, having put off their mourning for the day, were gaily attired for joy at the burning alive of their enemies. They had even adorned their raven locks with the brilliant crimson flowers of the pomegranate, as red as their own red lips, or the blood which had been shed in torrents by Spendius and Matho, and which was again to flow that very day on this iovful occasion of revenge.

Leading from the harbours and the Great Place up through the town to all these temples were three streets—the Vicus Salutaris, on the right, leading to the temple of Æsculapius; the Vicus Satyrnis, in the centre, leading to the great brazen god Moloch; and to the left, the Vicus Venerea or Venus Street, leading to the temple of the Carthaginian Venus and Juno in one; Tanais, Tanith, or Astarte, the Goddess of Love and the Queen of Heaven combined. These last two streets swept round on either side of the hill of the Byrsa or Citadel,

and it was on this hill that the eye of the youthful Hannibal civiefly sested, for within and above its walls he could see on the summit of the hill the temple of Melcareth, the unknown and invisible god of whom no image had ever been made. Melcaseth was the great Spirit of life and the protector of his father, before whom he was to register his yow.

Plainly built of white marble, in simple but solemn simplicity, it was surrounded with plain Doric columns of Numidian marble. This very plainness made the exterior of the building more impressive; and as it occupied the highest point in the whole city, the boy could see it clearly.

At length, with a sigh, he took one last lingering look all round, from the mountains of the Hermean Promontory to the Gulf, from the Gulf to Cape Carthage, and to the city from the bill of the Catacombs, round and past the triple wall enclosing the Megara, away to the white buildings of Tunis in the distance, and to the lake near at hand.

"I have seen it all, my father," he said at length; "not a headland nor a house, not a tree nor a temple, will ever fade away again from my memory. It is all engraven on my heart."

"It is well," said Hamilcar; "now go and prepare thyself to accompany me to the temple of Melcareth; thou shalt accompany me upon my elephant, for I shall go in state. Here, Maharbal! Imlico! Hanno! Gisco!"

A crowd of officers rushed in from the ante-chambers, where they were waiting; the great General gave directions about the ceremony that was to take place, and orderlies and messengers were soon galloping in every direction.

CHAPTER III

HANNIBAL'S VOW.

An hour later, a gorgeous procession started from the General's palace; for on this occasion Hamilcar, well knowing the hatred and jealousy with which he was regarded by the other Suffete or Chief Magistrate. Hanno, and, indeed, by more than half of the Council of one hundred senators, the real holders of power in ordinary times, had determined for once to assert the power which, in view of his recent victories, he knew that he. and he alone, held in the city. Being a great general, and just now, moreover, a victorious general, he determined that, since fortune and his own ability had for the moment placed him at the top of the tree, no sign of weakness on his own part should give to his enemies in the State the opportunity of pulling him down again from his pedestal. He had an object in view, and until he had obtained that object and left Carthage with almost regal powers over the army that he had got together, he was fully determined to maintain his own potent position by all the force at his command.

It was a whole army with which he set forth to pay his homage to the god Melcareth on that eventful June morning.

On the Great Place, just beyond the Forum, and about half a mile away, were massed, in two lines, forty war elephants fully accoutred with breastplates formed of scales of brass coated with gold. On the back of each elephant was a wooden tower containing four archers, whose burnished casques and breastplates glittered in the sun, also musicians carrying trumpets and horns. In rear of them and in front of the Forum itself was drawn up a body of a thousand Numidian cavalry, under the Chief Naravas, who, with a gold circlet round his head, which was studded with ostrich plumes, headed their van. Naravas, like all his followers, bestrode a magnificent white barb, without either saddle or bridle; the ornamental saddle cloth of golden embroidery, fastened by a cinglet, being merely for show, for the Numidians had no need for either saddles or bridles, but guided their horses with their knees. The hoofs of the horses were gilded, and their manes and tails had been newly stained with vermilion. Altogether, this band of Numidian cavalry formed a remarkable sight. The chief himself and all his men held a barbed dart in each hand, while a sheath or quiver containing other darts hung upon their left breasts. On the right side each carried a long, straight sword.

Following Naravas and his cavalry, the whole street up to Hamilcar's dwelling was filled with the soldiers of the "Sacred Band "—the élite of Carthage. This corps was comprised only of those belonging to the richest and noblest families, and they more than equalled in valour and dermination the fiercest of the mercenaries against whom they had been lately fighting. Their armour was of the most gorgeous description; it seemed literally made of gold; while necklaces of pearls and earrings of precious stones adorned their persons. On their fingers they wore gold rings in number equalling the battles they had been in—one for each fight; but many of them present on this eventful morn had taken part in so many fights under Hamilcar that they were unable to carry all their rings on their fingers. They had therefore attached them by smaller rings of strong metal to the edges of their shields, which shields were inlaid with gold and precious stones. With each maniple, or company of a hundred of the Sacred Band, was present-in rear-a hundred Greek slaves. These slaves wore collars of gold, were gorgeously attired, and bore in state the golden wine goblets from which the Sacred Band were wont to drink. Alone in the army the Sacred Band were allowed to drink wine when on service; for other soldiers to do so was death. Woe betide any soldier of any other corps who should be discovered in purloining or even drinking from one of these sacred cups. Crucifixion was the least of the evils that he might expect to befal him,

The Sacred Band were commanded at that time by Idherbal, the son of Gisco, the general who had been so barbarously murdered by Spendius and Matho. He was a noble-looking young man, mounted on a splendid chestnut barb. All his officers were however, like the men, dismounted. Originally two thousand five hundred in number, there now only remained eighteen hundred of Idherbal's troops.

Eight hundred of these filled the streets from the rear of the Numidian cavalry to Hamilcar's palace, the remaining thousand were massed behind the palace, and they in turn were to be followed by over three thousand Gauls who had, fortunately for themselves, immediately left the insurgent camp and joined Hamilcar on the first occasion of his advancing against the mercenaries. These Gauls were naked to the waist and carried long straight swords.

On each side of the road leading up to the citadel, for the whole distance at intervals of a few paces, were posted alternately "hastati" or spearmen, and cavalry soldiers to keep back the crowd. These were all Iberians or Spaniards, some of whom had come across with Hamilcar himself when he had left Sicily, while others had through emissaries been since recruited. They were all absolutely faithful to Hamilcar. The horses of the Spanish cavalry were saddled and bridled, and the soldiers of both horse and foot alike wore under their armour white tunics edged with purple. The cavalry carried a long straight sword, adapted either to cutting or thrusting, and a small shield on the left arm. There were about two thousand in number of these guards placed to line the streets.

With the exception of the Sacred Band of nobles, upon whom Hamilcar could perfectly rely, and whom, for State reasons, he wished to have that day much en evidence in his train, none of these troops, nearly eight thousand in number, were Carthaginians. Orders had been previously given that all the guard duties at the outposts and round the city walls were that day to be taken by the recently raised Carthaginian

troops. All the guards within the city were therefore held by troops to whom, as to these soldiers of his magnificent escort—Hamilcar's person was as sacred as that of a god.

Between the first and second detachments of the Sacred Band, in front of the door of the palace, stood Hamilcar's magnificent state elephant. Motee, or Pearl—the highest in all It was of great age, and had been brought from India through Persia. The Mahout, or driver, who was an Indian, was dressed in a crimson and gold turban, with a loose silken jacket and pantaloons of the same colours. elephant. Motee, was protected on the forehead, neck, head, and shoulders with plates formed of golden scales, while over all its body hung a cloth of the most gorgeous Tyrian purple, edged with gold. Round its legs, just above the feet, were anklets of silver, to which were attached bells like sledge bells. made of bronze, gilded. The tusks of the elephant were gigantic in size, and were painted in wide rings with vermilion, leaving alternate rings showing off the white ivory, the points of the tusks being left of the natural colour. Upon the back of the elephant was a car of solid silver, each side being formed of a crescent moon. It was constructed so as to contain two or three persons only. The front and rear of this car were formed of large shields, made so as to represent the sun. being of gold, and having a perfectly smooth surface in the centre, which was burnished as a mirror. Radiating lines of rougher gold extending to the edges of the shields made the shields indeed blaze like the sun itself, when the glory of the sun god fell upon them. Overhead was raised on silver poles a canopy, supporting a sable curtain or awning, upon which was represented in gold several of the best known constellations Thus did Hamilcar, by the symbolical nature of of the stars. this howdah, which he had had expressly made for this occasion in order to impress the populace, seem to say that, although devoted to Melcareth, the unseen god, of whom no representations could be made, he none the less placed himself under the protection of Baal, the sun god, of Tanith or Astarte, the moon goddess, and of all the other divinities whom the stars

represented. He knew that not only would the richness of this new and unheard of triumphal car impress the Carthaginian populace, always impressed by signs of wealth, but that the sacred symbolism of his thus surrounding himself with the emblems of all the mighty gods would impress them still more.

At length, all being ready, Hamiltar, accompanied by his little son. Hannibal, issued from the house, being surrounded by a body of his generals. Then the elephant was ordered to kneel, and a crowd of slaves ran forward with a ladder of polished bronze to place against its side. A body of "hastati." placed as a guard of honour, saluted by raising high above their heads and then lowering to the ground the points of their polished spears, a movement which they executed with the most absolute precision. Hamilcar looked critically at the soldiers for a minute, to see if there were any fault to detect in their bearing, then, when satisfied that nothing was wrong. acknowledged the salute and turned to compliment the officer He happened to be Xanthippus, a son of him in command. who had defeated Regulus. The troops were a body of 200 Greeks who had fled to Carthage from Lilybœum to escape slavery at the hands of the Romans. This young officer himself had joined Hamilcar in Sicily, and done him good service since.

"'Tis well! Xanthippus," he said, "if thy soldiers are always as worthy of thee as they are on this auspicious day, thou too shalt some day be worthy of thy father."

It was said so that all the band of Greeks could hear, and said in Greek. The praise was just enough, but not too much. It was a great deal from Hamilcar.

Without stirring an inch from the statuesque bronze-like attitudes in which they stood, a simultaneous cry arose from every throat that rent the air.

"Evoe Hamilcar!" Then there was silence.

Then instantly, on a signal made to him by Hamilcar, Xanthippus gave a short sharp order. Once more the spear points being lifted simultaneously from the ground flashed high in the air, then with a resounding thud all the butt ends of the spears were brought to the ground together, and the troops remained like a wall.

Hamilcar and his little son now mounted the elephant; the generals and staff officers who had accompanied him from the interior of the palace, also mounted the richly caparisoned horses which brilliantly clothed slaves were holding, and placed themselves on each side of the elephant. A blare of trumpets burst forth from musicians stationed behind the Greek spearmen, and the triumphal procession began its march towards the temple of Melcareth.

A trumpet note from a mounted herald now gave the signal to march to the forty elephants and other troops stationed ahead on the Great Place.

Here there was no delay. Hamilcar had given orders that the Vicus Satyrnus, that passing by the temple of Moloch, was the one to be followed, but the road was of course too narrow for a large number of elephants to march abreast. But they were well trained; all the elephants in both lines turned to the right into file, and every second elephant then coming up, the whole body was formed instantly into ten sections of four elephants each. The leading section of elephants now wheeled to the left at a trot, and all the others following at a trot, wheeled at exactly the same spot and the whole marched up the Vicus Satyrnus. Thus the square was clear of their enormous bulk soon enough to allow the Numidian cavalry of Naravas, also moving at a trot, to clear the square in time to avoid checking the advance of the Sacred Band marching behind on foot. When once the whole line, both of elephants and cavalry, was clear of the square, they assumed a walking pace, and then the musical instruments on the elephants were played loudly with triumphant music, which brought all of the inhabitants who, for it was still early, had not yet started for the temple of Baal, to the windows, verandahs, and doors.

"Hamilcar! Is Hamilcar coming?" they cried excitedly to those on the elephants and to the cavalry. But these were

far too well trained to pay the slightest attention, and pursued their way in silence.

When Hamilcar arrived, on his elephant, opposite the Forum, he saw the whole of the hundred senators standing on the verandah facing the road that he had to pass. All were dressed in purple togas, their necks were adorned with heavy necklaces of pearls or of sacred blue stones, large ear-rings were in their ears, their fingers were covered with rings, their wrists were ornamented with bracelets, and their sandals blazed with jewels.

Willingly or not, they, with one exception, saluted Hamilcar respectfully as he passed. The exception was a fat, flabby, middle-aged man with face and eyebrows painted. He was overloaded with gems and jewellery, but not all the jewellery in the world could have redeemed the ugliness of his face, or the awkwardness of his figure. As the elephant bearing Hamilcar approached, this man was apparently engaged in a wordy war with the soldiers lining the streets. evidently trying to force his way between their ranks, but the foot soldiers, smiling amusedly, placed their long spears lengthwise across the spaces between the horse soldiers who separated them, and kept him back. Gesticulating wildly, and perspiring at every pore, this grandly-dressed individual was cursing the soldiers by every god in the Punic calender, when the great General, the saviour of Carthage, arrived upon the scene. He instantly ordered the herald to sound a halt.

"Salutation to thee, O Suffete Hanno," he cried. "Why, what ails thee this morning? Art thou perchance suffering from another attack of indigestion, and were not the oysters good last night, or was it the flamingo pasties that have been too much for thee?"

"Curses be upon thy head, Hamilcar, and upon thy soldiers too," replied the other petulantly. "I but sought to cross the road to join my family in my house yonder, when these foreign devils of thine prevented me—me, Hanno, a Suffete of Carthage! It is atrocious, abominable! I will not stand it. I will be revenged."

Hamilcar glanced across the road to where, on a balcony within a few yards of him, were standing a bevy of young beauties, all handsomely attired. They were all smiling, indeed almost laughing, at the exhibition of bad temper by the overgrown Suffete; or maybe it was at Hamilcar's remark about his indigestion, for Hanno was a noted glutton. Seeing the young ladies, the General continued in a bantering tone:

"Ay! indeed, it is a meet cause for revenge that thou hast, O Hanno, in being thus separated, if only for a short space of time, from thy lovely daughters yonder."

"My daughters, my daughters!" spluttered out Hanno excitedly. "Why, thou knowest I have no daughters, Hamilcar. Dost thou mean to insult me?"

"I insult thee, noble Hanno! Are those noble young beauties, then, not thy daughters? Surely thou must pardon me if I am mistaken, but meseems they are of an appropriate age, and thou saidst but this very minute that my soldiers, meaning, I suppose, the soldiers of the State, had prevented thee from joining thy family yonder. Of what, then, consists thy family?"

At this sally there was a loud laugh, not only among the young girls on the balcony, but from all the assembled senators. For it was a matter of common ridicule that Hanno, whose first wife had been childless, had put her away in her middle age, and taken advantage of the recent law permitting polygamy to take to wife at once half a dozen young women belonging to noble families, whose parents were afraid to oppose such a dangerous and powerful person. Hanno was furious, but strove to turn the tables by ignoring this last remark.

"Whither goest thou, Hamilcar, with all this army? Hast come to conquer Carthage?" he asked sarcastically.

"And how could I conquer Carthage when it contains a Hanno, conqueror apparently of all the hearts therein? Could Lutatius Catulus have conquered Lilybœum even had but the mighty Admiral Hanno remained a little longer in the neighbourhood?"

This reference to Hanno's defeat at the Ægatian Islands made him furious. He could not bear the smiles he saw upon his young wives' faces and the sneers he imagined upon the faces of the senators behind him. He broke out violently:

"Whither goest thou, Hamilcar, with all these troops? As thy co-Suffete I demand to know, lest thou prove to be plotting against the State," and he stamped upon the ground in rage. Hamilcar smiled sarcastically.

"I go, Hanno, where all good Carthaginians should go on a day like this, to offer a sacrifice to the gods."

"Ah!" cried Hanno, seeing a chance, "'tis well that spite of all former evasions thou hast at length determined to do thy duty to thy country by frying yonder brat of thine as a thanksgiving to Moloch. I would that I might be there to see the imp frizzle, and all the rest of the Barcine tribe as well."

Hamilcar was now angry, but he answered in apparent politeness and good humour:

"There are some bodies that will frizzle far better than such a morsel, Hanno; but since thou wouldst see some frizzling, thou shalt even now accompany me as far as the temple of Baal. I have plenty of room on the elephant."

"Come hither, Idherbal," he cried, the chief of the Sacred Band having taken up a position near him, "tell some of thy men to assist the noble Suffete on to the car beside me. He is anxious to see some burning done to-day. He shall not be deprived of the pleasure of assisting in person at the burnt sacrifices."

Hanno turned pale. He tried to retract his words. The large tears fell down his flabby cheeks. He attempted to resist. But resistance was useless. In a few seconds the soldiers of Idherbal very roughly forced "the soldier's enemy," as he was rightly termed, upon the car beside Hamilcar, and the procession again started, leaving the hundred senators and all the women on the balcony, not that these latter cared much, trembling with fear; for they imagined, and with apparent reason, that Hamilcar was about to offer Hanno as a burnt

sacrifice to Moloch, and the senators did not know if their own turn might not come next. Therefore, raising their robes in dismay, they all rushed into the Forum, not caring in the least as to what might be the fate of Hanno, but only trembling for their own skins. Might not the time have really come when Hamilcar was about to revenge himself upon all the ancients for their long continued neglect of him and all the best interests of Carthage? And was not all the power in his hands? Thus they reasoned.

There was no doubt about it that all the power was in the hands of Hamilcar, and that, if he had been only a self-seeking man, he could easily that day and at that hour have seized and burnt not only Hanno, but also all those of the rich and ancients of Carthage, whom he knew to be inimical to himself. He could with the greatest ease have shattered the constitution, denounced the captured senators to the people as equally responsible with the mercenaries for all the miseries they had suffered, and caused them to be offered up wholesale to Baal in that very same holocaust with Matho and Hanno. Hamilcar was not a self-seeking man, or he would that day, after first removing all his enemies from his path, have declared himself King of Carthage. And the people would have applauded him, and he would have ruled wisely, and probably saved Carthage from the terrible destruction which awaited her later as a reward for treating his son Hannibal, in after years, with the same culpable neglect that she had shown himself.

Hamilcar, however, did not imagine that his duty to his country lay in making himself king. Nevertheless, he determined to show his power, and to establish it over the senators, at least until such time as he should have obtained from them what he wanted—what he considered needful for his country's welfare merely, and not for his own.

To the young Hannibal, who had from the time of earliest youth been brought up to look upon his father's foes as his own, every word of what had taken place was full of meaning. Looking disdainfully at the pale-faced Suffete, who, with the

tears flowing down his fat cheeks, looked the image of misery, he asked:

"Father, is it true that this man wanted you to offer me up as a sacrifice to Baal? I have heard so before!"

"Yes, it is true, my son, and I should, owing to the pressure put on me, doubtless have done so had I not thought that thou wouldst be of far more use to thy country living than dead."

"Ah! well," replied Hannibal complacently, "now we will burn him instead, and he will deserve it, and someone else will get all his young wives. I am glad! But if I were going to be burned I would not have blubbered as he is doing like a woman. Just look at his disgusting tears! I suppose it is all the fat running out. Pah! how soft he is!" and the boy disdainfully dug his finger into the soft cheek of Hanno, just below the eye, where it sunk in the fat nearly up to the knuckle.

"Do not defile thy hands by touching the reptile, Hannibal," remarked his father.

So the boy desisted, and sat silently and disgustedly watching the wretched man as they moved on.

Meantime, as the procession advanced slowly along the crowded streets, and the people saw the tear-stained and miserable-looking Hanno seated on the grand elephant in the gorgeous shining car beside Hamilcar, whose mortal enemy he had always shown himself to be, the word was passed from mouth to mouth throughout the multitude, "Hamilcar is going to burn Hanno! Hamilcar is going to sacrifice Hanno!" And the fickle people shouted loudly cries of welcome and triumph for Hamilcar, and gave groans and howls of detestation for Hanno. So certain did his end seem to be, that the wretched man was dying a double death beforehand.

At length the open place was reached by the temple of Moloch. Here all the women who had heard the cry became perfectly delirious with delight when they saw the fat Suffete in his miserable condition. "Smite him, smite him," they cried. "Tear him to pieces; let us drag him limb from limb; the man who has caused the war; the man who has deprived us

of our lovers and murdered our husbands, but who has, nevertheless, taken six young wives himself. Burn him! burn him!" And before the guards lining the streets knew what was about to happen, at least a hundred women slipped under their arms, and made a way through. Then rushing to Hamilcar's elephant, they endeavoured to spring up into the car, with the hope of tearing the hated Suffete to the ground.

Motee was the tallest elephant in Carthage, and they could not effect their purpose, though one young woman, more agile than the rest, being helped by others, got such a hold of the trappings, that she was able at last to swing herself right up into the car.

"This kiss is for my lost lover," said she, and seizing Hanno by the ears, she made her teeth meet through the flabby part of his cheek; "and this kiss for thy six wives," she cried, and this time she made her little white teeth meet right through the other cheek just below the eye.

The soldiers overcame the other women and beat them back, and even got hold of Hanno's assailant by the legs; but for a while she could not be dragged away, for Hanno himself was clinging with both hands to the side of the car, and she had him tight by the ears and with her teeth. At last, exhausted, she let go; but as she did so, she scored his face all down on both sides with her long finger nails, leaving him an awful picture, streaming with blood.

Meanwhile the drums and trumpets had ceased sounding, and the cries of the miserable, tortured victims inside the temple could be plainly heard as the priests ran out to see what was going on. The smell of roasting flesh also filled the air with a sickening odour.

The women who had been beaten back from the elephant now remained outside the line of soldiers, which had been reinforced by some of Hamilcar's escort. They could not possibly approach a second time; but, like a group of hungry hyenas, they remained screaming and gesticulating, thirsting for their prey. Many of them were beautiful, most of them were young. Their raven tresses were raised above their heads, and

bound with fillets of gold. Their dresses displayed their beautiful arms and bosoms, their necks were covered with jewels, their wrists with bracelets, and their fingers were almost concealed by the rings of precious stones. They were clothed in purple and fine linen; but in spite of all these signs of womanhood gently nurtured, they had already ceased to be women, and had become brutes. The burning, the blood, the torture, the smell of the roasting flesh, the cries of the victims, the sight of the dying agonies of men from an early hour that morning, had completely removed all semblance from them of the softer attributes of womanhood, and they had become panthers, wolves.

"Give him to us. Hamilcar!" they screamed: "give over to us the wretch, who, by refusing to pay the mercenaries, caused the war. We will burn him, torture him! Burn him! burn him!" They became fatigued at length with their own screaming, until many fell upon the ground fainting and exhausted. Then Hamilcar sent for all the musicians upon the elephants in front. He also commanded the priests to bring all the kettle drums forth from the temple of Baal, whose terrible brazen figure could be plainly seen, red-hot and glowing, through the smoke. Three separate times he commanded all the brazen instruments and the drums to be sounded together. The horrible din thus raised drowned the cries of the women; but no sooner did the blare of the trumpets cease. and the roulade of the drums fall, than the women began shrieking once more, "Give him to us, Hamilcar! Let us tear him in pieces, torture him! Burn him! burn him!"

Then to enforce silence, Hamilcar, in addition to the awful sounds of the musical instruments, ordered the drivers of the elephants to strike them with the goads and make them trumpet. The trumpeting of the elephants, in addition to the rest of the infernal din, at length completely drowned the yells of the women. They subsided in complete silence. Then, rising in his car, Hamilcar addressed the multitude:

"Oh, priests! men and women of Carthage! it is not meet that I decide upon this man's fate. He hath been mine

enemy all my life as much, ay, far more, than he hath been yours. His fate, whether we shall slay him now or leave him to the future terrible vengeance of the gods, shall not be left in either your hands or in mine. Here in this car with him and me, a sacred car devoted as all can see to all the gods, is my son Hannibal, the favoured of Baal. His young life, from jealousy of me the father, this miscreant, Hanno, hath often tried to take; ay, even this very day before the Hundred Judges he suggested openly that I—I who have saved you all, and saved Carthage, should sacrifice my young son in a common heap with the bloodthirsty malefactors who are, rightly for their awful crimes, being sacrificed this day to the mighty Baal Hammon."

Here such a howl of execration against Hanno again burst forth from the crowd that the elephants had once more to be made to trumpet, and the musical instruments to raise their hideous din, to obtain silence.

Then Hamilcar continued:

"In the hands of this my son, whom I hope may be spared to protect this country even as I have done, I leave the life of his would-be murderer. Speak, Hannibal, my son, say, shall this Hanno, who would have slain thee, die now for thy vengeance and for mine? Or shall he be left in the hands of the gods, who doubtless for our punishment have placed such a scourge here on earth among us?"

The boy Hannibal arose and regarded steadily, first the now silent crowd, and then the bloated form of Hanno, who, with face all bleeding, hung back upon his seat in the car, while stretching forth his ring-covered hands to the child as if for mercy. Then he spoke clearly, in the voice of a child but with the decision of a man:

"My father, and people of Carthage, I am destined from my birth to be a warrior, one to fight for and protect my country. Do not then let my first act, where the life of others be concerned, be that of an executioner. It would not be worthy of one of the blood of Barca. Let Hanno live. The gods are powerful; his punishment lies in their hands!" The boy sank back upon the cushions in the car, and a roar of applause greeted the speech, for it met the fancy of the crowd. Henceforth the life of Hanno was secure. He was taken off the elephant, placed in a litter, and sent to his home under a small escort. But the escort was not necessary. He was now looked upon as one under the curse of the gods, and no one in the crowd, whether man or woman, would have defiled their hands by touching him.

Meanwhile, Hamilcar and his son proceeded to the temple of Melcareth, where, entering the sacred fane quite alone save for the priests, the former sacrificed to his protecting deity a bull and a lamb. For no human blood was ever shed in those days in the temple of the Carthaginian unknown god. And in that solemn presence, on that sacred occasion, the boy Hannibal plunged his right arm up to the elbow in the reeking blood of the sacrifice, and solemnly vowed before the great god Melcareth an eternal hatred to Rome and the Romans.

A few weeks later, Hamilcar, having won from the terrorstricken senators all that he required—supreme and absolute command, and sufficient money and war material—left Carthage with an army and a fleet. He coasted ever westward, the army marching by land, and subduing any malcontents that might still exist among the Numidians and Libyans. At length, having reached the Pillars of Hercules, the modern Straits of Gibraltar, he, by means of his fleet, crossed over into Spain. And Hannibal accompanied his father.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

ELISSA.

ALL the lower parts of Spain had been conquered and settled. Hamilcar had died, as he had lived, fighting nobly, after enjoying almost regal rank in his new country. Hasdrubal, who had succeeded him, was also dead, and now Hannibal, Hamilcar's son, a man in the young prime of life, held undisputed sway throughout the length and breadth of the many countries of Iberia that his father's arms and his father's talents had won for Carthage.

In the delightful garden of a stately building reared upon a hill within the walls of the city of Carthagena or New Carthage, a group of girls and young matrons were assembled under a spreading tree, just beyond whose shade was situated a marble fish pond, filled with graceful gold and silver fishes. The borders of the pond were fringed with marble slabs, and white marble steps led down into the basin for bathing purposes. In the centre a fountain threw up in glittering spray a jet of water which fell back with a tinkling sound into the basin.

Upon the marble steps, apart from the other young women, sat a maiden listlessly dabbling her fingers and one foot in the water, and watching the fishes as they darted hither and thither after some insect, or rose occasionally to the surface to nibble at a piece of bread which she threw them from time to time. The girl, who was in her seventeenth year, was in all the height of that youthful beauty which has not yet quite

developed into the fuller charms of womanhood, and yet is so alluring with all the possibilities of what it may become.

Of Carthaginian origin on the father's side, her mother was a princess of Spain—Camilla, daughter of the King of Gades. She had inherited from the East the glorious reddish black hair and dark liquid eves, and had derived from the Atlantic breezes, which had for centuries swept her Iberian home, the brilliant peach-like colouring with its delicate bloom, seeming as though it would perish at a touch, which is still to be seen in the maidens of the modern Seville. For this city of Andalusia had been, under the name of Shefelah, a part of her grandfather's dominions. Tall she was and graceful; her bosom, which was exposed in the Greek fashion on one side, might have formed the model to a Phidias for the young Psyche: her ivory arms were gently rounded and graceful. Her rosy delicate foot was of classical symmetry, and the limb above, displayed while dabbling in the water, was so shapely, with its small ankle and rounded curves, that, as she sat on the marble there by the fish pond in her white flowing robes. an onlooker might well have been pardoned had he imagined that he was looking upon a nymph, a naiad just sprung from the waters, rather than upon the daughter of man.

But it was in the face that lay the particular charm. Above the snow-white forehead and the pink, shell-like ear, which it partially concealed, lay the masses of ruddy black hair bound with a silver fillet. The delicious eyes, melting and tender, beamed with such hopes of love and passion that had the observer been, as indeed were possible, content for ever to linger in their dusky depths of glowing fire, he might have exclaimed, "a woman of passion, one made for love only, nothing more!" Yet closer observation disclosed that above those eyes curved two ebony bows which rivalled Cupid's arc in shape, and which, although most captivating, nevertheless expressed resolution. The chin, although softly rounded, was also firm; the nose and delicious mouth, both almost straight, betokened a character not easily to be subdued, although the redness and slight fulness of the lips seemed almost to pro-

claim a soft sensuous side to the nature, as though they were made rather for the kisses of love than to issue commands to those beneath her in rank and station.

Such, then, is the portrait of Elissa, Hannibal's daughter.

The other ladies, including her aunt, the Princess Cœcilia, widow of Hasdrubal, a buxom, merry-looking woman of thirty, kept aloof, respecting her reverie. For, notwithstanding her youth, the lady Elissa was paramount, not only in the palace, . but also in the New Town or City of Carthagena during the absence of her father Hannibal and her uncles Hasdrubal and Mago at the siege of the Greek city of Saguntum, and had been invested by Hannibal, on his departure, with all the powers of a regent. For, being motherless almost from her birth, Hannibal, a young man himself, had been accustomed to treat her as a sister, almost as much as a daughter. He had been married when a mere lad, for political reasons, by his father Hamilcar. and Elissa had been the sole offspring of the marriage. her mother's death he had remained single, and devoted all his fatherly and brotherly love to training his only daughter to have those same noble aims, worthy of the lion's brood of Hamilcar, which inspired all his own actions in life. these aims may be summed up in a few words: devotion to country before everything; self abnegation, av. self sacrifice in every way, for the country's welfare; ambition in its highest sense, not for the sake of personal aggrandisement, but for the glory of Carthage alone. No hardships, no personal abasement even—further, not even extreme personal shame, or humiliation if needful, was to be shrunk from if thereby the interests of Carthage could be advanced. Self was absolutely and at all times to be entirely set upon one side and placed out of the question, as though no such thing as self existed; the might, glory, and power of the Carthaginian kingdom were to be the sole rule, the sole object of existence, and with them the undying hatred of and longing for revenge upon Rome and the Romans, as the greatest enemies of that kingdom, through whom so many humiliations, including the loss in war of Sicily, and the loss by fraud of Sardinia, had been inflicted

upon the great nation founded by Dido, sister of Pygmalion, King of Tyre.

These, then, were the precepts that Hannibal had ever, from her earliest youth, inculcated in his daughter; and with the object that she might learn early in life to witness and expect sudden reverses of fortune, he had hitherto, since her twelfth year, ever taken her with him upon his campaigns against the Iberian tribes. Thus she might from early experience be prepared, should the cause arise, to fulfil a noble destiny, even as he himself, having from his tenth year borne arms under his father Hamilcar and brother-in-law Hasdrubal, had been prepared for the mighty role which, with the siege of Saguntum, he was now commencing to fill in the world's history.

For the Greek city of Saguntum, on the eastern coast of Spain, was strictly allied with Rome, and the fact of Hannibal's attacking it was, he well knew, equivalent to a commencement of a new war with mighty Rome herself.

Upon Hannibal's departure for the siege of Saguntum some eight months previous, he had taken all the generals and captains in whom he could put trust and the greater part of the army with him. Although not styled a king, his power was at that time more than regal in all the parts of Spain south of the Ebro, and his authority as regards the care of the City of New Carthage itself he had, on his departure, delegated under his sign manual and seal absolutely to his daughter Elissa.

It is, then, no cause for wonder, if her female companions looked with some degree of awe and respect upon this sixteen-years-old girl who sat there so pensively dabbling her hands and feet in the marble basin, while raising her head occasionally to cast a glance through the embrasures on the battlemented walls surrounding the garden, upon the gulf below and the blue sea stretching out far beyond. Elissa had far sight, and it seemed to her once or twice as though she could make out, shining in the evening sun, far away upon the horizon, the white sails of ships. But they were no larger than specks, and soon disappeared altogether; therefore the maiden, thinking

that she had been misled by some sea birds, soon gave up watching the sea, and returned to the apparent contemplation of the fishes, but really to the continuation of the reverie upon which she was engaged.

Meanwhile the ladies under the trees were chatting away merrily.

"Oh! dear me, how hot it is," exclaimed the rotund little Princess Cœcilia, fanning herself vigorously with a palm leaf fan. "I am sure when my poor husband, Hasdrubal, built this city of New Carthage, he must have selected it purposely as being the warmest site in all Spain, just to remind him of his native country which he was so fond of. Or else," she continued, "it was to try and keep down my inclination to fat. Oh! dear me!" and she fanned away at herself more vigorously than ever.

"Don't call it fat," interposed Cleandra, a very handsome fair young woman of about twenty, who was herself by no means inclined to be thin—"say rather adipose deposit, it is a far more elegant way of putting it."

"Or plumpness, Cleandra, that is nicer still," struck in Melania, a dark young beauty with vivacious black eyes, who was a year younger. "I wish I could call myself plump like thee, I am sure I should not mind the heat," she added, "instead of being the scarecrow that I am," and rising she surveyed with mock ruefulness her really very graceful figure. She was the tallest of all the young women there, and was perfectly well aware of the fact that her comparative slenderness was most becoming to her willowy and lissome figure.

"A scarecrow, thou a scarecrow," almost screamed the little Cœcilia. "Oh! just listen to the conceited thing; why, thou hast a lovely figure and thou knowest it; there is none in all New Carthage, save Elissa yonder, who can compare to thee. But then, of course, no one can compare with her in any way. But what a girl she is! how can she sit out there in the afternoon sun like that? the worst kind of sun, my dears, for the complexion, I can assure you. I am sure if I were to remain like that for only five minutes I should lose my com-

plexion entirely, yes, become perfectly covered with freckles I am certain, in even less than five minutes. Now what are you giggling at, you naughty girls? I declare you are too wicked, both of you; I shall have to report you to our Queen Regent yonder and ask her to put you both in the dungeon if you make fun of an old lady like me. Alas! thirty years of age, don't you call that old?"

For with a sly glance at each other the two girls had mutually looked at the lively little princess's manifestly artificial complexion which was trickling away in little runnels down her cheeks.

"I wonder what she is thinking about?" she interposed hastily, to turn away the merry girls' attention from herself, and glancing across towards the lady Elissa.

"Who?" said Cleandra.

"Why, Elissa, of course," replied that lady's aunt. "Canst thou not see that she hath been in a brown study for ever so long? She is no more thinking of the fish than I am; her thoughts are miles and miles away. But just notice how pretty the ruddy tints are in her dark hair, lighted up like that by the afternoon sun."

"Perhaps she is thinking of affairs of State," answered Cleandra, "and whether she is to put us in that black hole or no."

"Or, perhaps," said Melania with a grain of malice, "and far more likely, she is thinking of the siege of Saguntum and whether a certain young officer of cavalry called Maharbal will ever come back from the war again to do what we girls cannot hope to do, that is cheer her in her solitude. I really should like to go and disturb her, she reminds me so of her namesake Dido—Elissa is Hebrew for Dido, thou knowest, Lady Cœcilia — mourning on the heights of Carthage for her lost Æneas."

"I wonder what she sees in that Maharbal," continued Melania, in a tone of pique; "a great big mountain of a hobbledehoy, that's what I call him, and merely a prefect of the Numidian cavalry, too. Such assurance on his part to be

always making love to her! I wonder that Hannibal allows it —a mere nobody!"

"A mere nobody! a hobbledehoy! nonsense!" said the princess, "thou'rt jealous, Melania, because he never looks at thee. Why, he is own nephew to Syphax, King of Massaesyllia, and cousin to the powerful Massinissa, King of Massyllia, both great Libyan princes.

"Mere vassals of Carthage! and the last named not very trustworthy," replied the other interrupting.

"Well then," gabbled on the princess, "look at his strength, a hobbledehoy indeed; Maharbal is a regular Hercules, and hath a beautiful face just like the celebrated Hermes of Praxiteles. I think Elissa will be a very lucky girl if she weds a magnificent fellow like that; she will be the mother of a race of giants."

"Shsh! Shsh!" cried both the girls, smiling in spite of themselves. "Elissa is listening to all we are saying—just look at her."

"Yes, yes, you wicked people, and she hath been listening for the last quarter of an hour," cried Elissa, springing to her feet as red as a rose. "But really, my aunt is too bad, she maketh me ashamed; say, what shall we do with her for punishment? put her in the fish pond I think." Bounding across the open space, she playfully seized upon the merry little woman, and aided by the two others, dragged her in spite of her cries, screams, and vigorous resistance to the very brink of the marble basin. She struggled violently, and but with difficulty escaped her fate.

"Oh, dear me! think of my complexion—cold water in the afternoon is bad for it. Oh! I did not mean a word, dear Elissa. Oh, dear me, I shall die," and with a vigorous final effort for freedom, as she was really a very strong young woman, suddenly she pushed both Elissa and Melania together over the brink so that they fell with a splash into the shallow pond. Then being left alone with the plump Cleandra, who had no strength whatever, she speedily overcame her, and threw her in after the others, remaining with torn garments and

dishevelled hair, shrieking with laughter, and panting for breath on the bank.

"Now there is naught for us but to have a bathe," cried Elissa gaily; and first drenching the princess with a shower of spray, and then springing up the marble steps, the three girls quickly threw off their thin, wet, clinging garments.

Standing there together in a pretty group for a brief minute or two, poised on the top of the marble steps, with arms raised in graceful curves while loosening the fillets of silver from the hair that fell in masses to the hips, they seemed in all their youthful beauty like the three graces personified.

At that very moment, from behind the trees, the sound was heard of a horse's hoofs galloping on the turf, and in a second an armed warrior, mounted on a black charger covered with foam and utterly exhausted, appeared upon the scene. At the same time, a great sound of shouting was heard in the town without the garden walls, which shouting was taken up again and again, till the clamour seemed literally to fill the air. The shouting sounded like the cheers for victory.

The princess was the first to recover her composure.

"Why, it's Maharbal," she cried; "jump into the water, girls, instantly. Fancy his coming like that!" Then, rushing in front of the warrior, she wildly waved her hands at the horse, shouting, "Go back! Maharbal, go away, thou wicked man, go back. Dost not see that the girls are bathing?"

At that moment they all plunged into the water once more like frightened swans.

"In the name of Hannibal!" cried the young warrior, "let me pass. I must speak to Elissa, and instantly, or my head will fall," and he held up Hannibal's signet ring before the dripping princess's astonished gaze.

"Oh!" screamed the princess, falling back affrighted. "Hannibal's ring! Yes, of course, Hannibal's orders are law."

Maharbal advanced to the edge of the shallow pond. In this the maidens were now crouching and partially concealing themselves under some flags, but in spite of all, their heads and shoulders remained uncovered. Elissa and Cleandra faced Maharbal and strived to look dignified. Melania, on the other hand, had turned her back upon him.

Curiosity and anger combined caused her to turn her head, and she was the first to speak, as Maharbal, his charger beside him, stood upon the steps. Both she and Cleandra, of noble Iberian families by birth, were, although treated as of the family, but slave girls in Hannibal's household, therefore she had no right to speak in the tone she now used, except the right of outraged modesty that every woman possesses.

"Begone! Maharbal, thou insolent wretch, begone instantly, or the Lady Elissa will have thee scourged and beheaded for thine impertinence. How darst thou insult us, thou ruffian? I wish that thou wert dead."

At this instant, Maharbal's war-horse, with a mournful kind of half scream, half sigh, fell upon the ground at the edge of the pond, and with a quiver of all its limbs expired. The warrior turned to watch it for a second, then looking back, remarked sadly: "My best charger, and alas! the third I have killed since yesterday morning. But there is no time for talk. Lady Elissa, my business is with thee alone, and it brooks absolutely not a moment's delay. Wilt thou kindly direct thy slaves," and he looked hard at Melania, "to leave the water at once. I must speak with thee alone. I obey the General's strict orders.

"Pray be quick," he added, "for I feel my strength rapidly failing me, and if I have not fulfilled my duty before, like my horse yonder, I die, I shall have failed in my vows to my General and to my country."

He removed his helmet as he spoke, and all the three maidens noticed not only that the young man was turning deadly pale, but that a wound on the side of the head, which had been covered with coagulated blood, had broken out, and was bleeding violently afresh.

But he had yet strength to hand a garment, the first he found to hand, to Elissa, who, while attiring herself in the

water, turned sharply to her attendants, and addressed them authoritatively.

"Leave the water, maidens, and let no false shame delay ye for a moment, for I see this is a matter of life or death: Begone at once, and thou, mine aunt," she cried.

Like startled deer, the two girls, having recovered some of the scattered raiment, fled from the pond, and rushed within the palace, followed by the dishevelled Princess Cœcilia. But whether from being reminded thus forcibly that she was but a slave, or from a combination of feelings, no sooner had Melania reached her apartment than she burst into a flood of violent weeping. The princess was wringing her hands as she went, and talking aloud.

"Oh, dear me! this is very odd and very dreadful, and most improper! But poor Maharbal's horse is dead, and he looks at death's door himself. Oh! what hath happened? I hope Hannibal is not dead as well, or a prisoner, or anything awful. But nay! he hath sent his seal. But I must prepare a room for poor Maharbal to die in; where shall I get a bed big enough? what a long body he will be." And so chattering to herself, for want of anyone else to talk to, she left Maharbal, the handsome young warrior, alone with the beautiful child of sixteen, the Lady Elissa.

CHAPTER II.

MAHARBAL.

THE young warrior had sunk down upon the grass, and was leaning wearily upon his elbow by the time that, having partially robed herself, Elissa was able to issue from the pond and fly to his side. He seemed dying. Oblivious of all but the presence of the man whom in her heart she loved with all the spontaneity of a youthful, ardent nature, she not only thought of nothing but him, but she shewed it clearly by the look in her eyes and by her actions.

"Oh, Maharbal! Maharbal! look not thus. Dost thou not know that I love thee?"

She stooped over, seized his hand and pressed it to her lips, then, with part of her raiment which was lying at hand, she repeatedly bathed his brows with the cool water from the pond. But his eyes closed as though he were in a faint; whereupon she leant over, and in an agony of fear kissed him madly on the lips, muttering the while some incoherent loving words, and cooing in his ear. They were the first kisses that ever she had given to man, the virgin kisses of her beautiful lips. Her embraces brought him to himself. Despite the delight that shone in his eyes and the gratitude he felt at the unlooked-for favour, the wounded warrior had not by any means forgotten his duty. With returning consciousness he stretched out his hand and gently pushed her back.

"This is no time for kisses, Elissa; there is other work to be done. The State, thy father's life, and thine own are to be considered; help me to sit up and to rest against my poor dead charger. There, that will do; now I feel better."

For with all the might of her weak arms she had managed to

drag rather than help him into a sitting posture, and place him with his back against the dead horse.

"Now sit by me and listen, and read what I have brought thee. First, take this seal from my finger; it is a duplicate of Hannibal's signet ring. Here within my doublet I have a letter; canst thou get it? I have no strength left."

Elissa felt for some time beneath the doublet with trembling

fingers, but could not find the letter.

"Hold my hand and guide it," he said, smiling faintly. Thus aided, he produced a sealed letter from under his leather jerkin. "Take my dagger and cut it open," he said authoritatively.

She obeyed, trembling like the child she really was.

"Now read aloud, that I may know thou hast the meaning. But stay; first bathe my face once more, for I must keep my senses about me."

Once more she plunged her garment into the cool water, and for a few minutes bathed his head and face. The young colossus gave a sigh, then seemed restored: the colour partly came back to his cheek.

"Now read!" he said: "read."

But Elissa's eyes were filled with tears, so that she could not read the triangular Punic characters.

"Read it to me thyself, Maharbal," she answered at length, "for I cannot. There! I will hold it for thee; will that do?" So he began:

"In the name of the Great God Melcareth, the Invisible God, the God of Tyre, of Sidon, the God of Carthage, Greeting. From Hannibal, the son of Hamilcar, Commander-in-Chief of the Carthaginian troops and Governor-General of Iberia, to his daughter Elissa, Regent and Governor of New Carthage.

"My daughter, these words are written by the hand of my scribe and friend, Silenus, but they will be sealed with my signet, which thou knowest, and thou canst verify the seal if so be they arrive in thy hands.

"They are sent by the hand of Maharbal, whose fidelity to

me is assured. He also hath some liking for thee if I be not mistaken. Maharbal was wounded in yesterday's action, but he is young, of great strength, and of a great courage; he may succeed in accomplishing the journey. No other but Maharbal in mine army could ride 2,000 stades without rest. Should he not succeed, the gods will not have willed it.

"Yesterday, oh, my daughter, after a siege of over eight months' duration, we stormed and took the town and suburbs of Saguntum. The enemy fought to the last with the greatest courage, and our losses are very great.

"Several of my generals, including Hanno, who was the Commander of the Numidian Cavalry—he was killed in the pursuit of the fugitives—are dead. Most of the tribunes are dead or disabled, and, in short, there is scarce an officer of either cavalry or infantry who is not either dead or wounded. I myself am seriously wounded, but not dangerously. Maharbal was, by the favour of Melcareth, the means of preserving my life. He will now succeed Hanno as Commander of the Numidian Cavalry.

"Every male Greek in the city of Saguntum, no matter of what age, we have put to the sword. All the older women. that is all women over thirty, I have ordered to be sent out into the country to be an incumbrance to the tribes of their Iberian allies. All young matrons up to about the age of thirty, and all girls under that age, I have handed over to my troops to do with as they will. They will probably soon wish to sell them as slaves for the Carthaginian market. This refers to the Greek and also Roman women of all classes, from the wives and daughters of the generals and rich citizens down to the women of the lowest orders. For all are captives, and all are slaves in the hands of my officers and men. Every Iberian woman hath been allowed to go free. Every Iberian man hath likewise been granted his liberty. This clemency on my part will gain us many allies among the Celtiberians north of the river Iberus, whence most of these people came.

"Our spoils of war are enormous, although the citizens foolishly attempted to burn themselves with their goods in the market-

place, which folly was prevented by our rapid advance when the breaches were stormed. In saying burn themselves, I intended to convey that the male inhabitants, being Greeks, tried to burn their women and save themselves; this is the usual Greek custom. But the women were saved, and are now being consoled by my army. It is the men who sought to burn them by fire because they could not carry them away with them who are dead. This is all the news.

"Now, my daughter, I cease to write to thee as thy father, but as thy General I command thee. It is the Commander-in-chief writing to the Regent and Governor of New Carthage.

"Maharbal is charged to deliver unto thee this letter if he be alive, and if thou be alive. He is to find thee, and not to quit thee until thou readest this letter in his presence. Should he fail in this duty of his own fault, he will lose his head. Shouldest thou cause him to fail by thine own neglect of duty, thine own life will be at stake. For as Regent and Governor of New Carthage thou hast many lives in thine hands, and thou art answerable for all to me, thy commanding officer, and through me to the State.

"Now, know this, I have learned only this very day from some Roman emissaries captured by me, and since executed, that there is a plot against me in Carthage. Upon learning that I had attacked the city of Saguntum, contrary, it must be owned, to the treaty signed, from sheer inability to resist, after my father Hamilcar's death, by my brother-in-law, thy late uncle Hasdrubal, the Roman Senate decided to send an embassy to Carthage to demand my surrender to Rome. That embassy departed quite recently, comparatively speaking, but found the party of Hanno, the late Suffete of Carthage, who was, in his lifetime, the enemy of Hamilcar, in the ascendant. Adherbal, the deceased Hanno's eldest son, is now the head of that party. He entertained the Roman envoys handsomely, and, without any authority from the State, but merely in his private capacity as a citizen, promised them, when drunk, both the loss of my head, and the loss of thy virtue. He is a mere boaster, as was his father, who sought to have me sacrificed at the age of nine

years to Moloch, and who, but for my own childish words, which saved him, would himself have been sacrificed instead. Yet, nevertheless, boasters sometimes succeed. For having boasted, they seek to make good their words, and the greatest success is often to those who attempt much. I am not, remember, writing now, Oh! Elissa, as a father, but as thy Commander-in-chief, therefore hearken unto my words.

"Should the sacrifice of my head benefit my country, the enemy or the country are welcome to my head.

"Again! Should the sacrifice of thy virtue benefit thy country, the enemy or the country must be welcome to thy virtue. But here there is no sacrifice necessary. I therefore do not intend to lose my head, nor do I suggest unto thee that thou shouldst sacrifice thy virtue. Yet there is a deep-laid plot, and Melcareth alone, the great, the invisible God, knoweth whether Maharbal will reach thee in time to stay it.

"Being a man of war myself, and accustomed to open warfare from my very earliest youth, I love not the torture. Yet for once I praise the rack, since by it I have gained the secrets of this plot.

"Know then this. Without waiting for the decision in council of the Hundred, the party of Hanno are about to send. or have already despatched Adherbal, with a fleet strongly armed with rowers and many marines who are desperate, mere mercenaries drawn from the disbanded armies in Greece and Sicily, all ruffians of the very worst description. His intention is to obtain by fraud or force both possession of New Carthage and of thine own person, knowing me to be away at Saguntum. After that, through thee, he hopes to obtain possession of me also. I cannot tell if these words will reach thee in time or no, but thou art now, if they do reach thee in time, forewarned. Pay no attention to the false letters that Adherbal may bring thee; they are but a snare; he and all his accursed faction are but scheming against the State. In no case let him in mine absence, thou living, obtain possession of New Carthage or of thyself.

"As for Hannibal, thy father and thy commander, fear not

for him. Do but thy duty in this crisis, oh, my daughter and my delegate!

"(Sealed) HANNIBAL."

As Maharbal read the last lines of this letter, he pushed it back towards Elissa, who held it.

"Go!" he said, "go at once, heed not me. I saw the sails of Adherbal's fleet as I rode up. Leave me instantly."

"I saw them too!" cried the girl, "but I knew not what they were. Oh, beloved Maharbal! what if thou shouldst not survive? How can I leave thee thus?"

"Go! go at once," replied Maharbal feebly, "send someone to me if thou choosest, but it is immaterial; go thou at once, do thy duty. Art thou not Regent and Governor of Carthage? Stay, kiss me once, an' thou wilt, for indeed 'tis sweet, Elissa, my beloved, thus for once to feel thy kiss. Ah! now I can die in peace, but go, go! thine own honour, thy country, and the safety of Hannibal are all at stake."

Leaving the imprint of her fervent kisses on his lips, she hastily departed.

The instant she had left him, Maharbal, the self-reliant young giant, who had hitherto kept himself up by mere force of will, went off into a dead swoon. For the blood had been continually oozing from the wound above his temple while he had been reading Hannibal's letter, and moreover, he had not been out of the saddle or tasted food for forty-eight hours.

Thus it came to pass that when, shortly after, the lively little princess came out again, accompanied by Melania, they found the beautiful young man lying all alone; quite inert and apparently dead, by the side of his horse. And under his head was a large pool of blood. They had brought wine with them, and sought to force it between his lips, but the attempt was useless. They then strove to move him from where he was lying, but in vain. No assistance could be obtained from any of the men, for Elissa had issued orders to double all the guards, and placed every available man on duty on the ram-

parts or the quays. And so poor Maharbal lay bleeding and unconscious.

Meanwhile two bodies of men had been hastily employed in placing booms across the entrances to the harbour; other armed forces were drawn up in detachments upon the island and wharves, and on all sides of the entrances to the harbour, and a large fleet of vessels, flying the Carthaginian flag of a white horse on a purple ground, and consisting of fifty-two stately quinquiremes and twenty-two splendid hexiremes, all crowded with armed marines, in addition to the full crews averaging three hundred rowers apiece, being disappointed at finding the entrance to the harbour closed, was just heaving to, and casting its anchors in the open sea.

CHAPTER III.

FOREWARNED.

THE City of New Carthage, built by Hasdrubal, the son-in-law of Hamilcar, with whose second wife and now disconsolate widow we have just made acquaintance, was most excellently situated, whether from an æsthetic or a strategic point of view.

It was built upon a hilly promontory jutting out into a gulf which lay towards the south-west. The two entrances to this gulf, which were separated by an island, were at a distance of about two thousand yards from the walls of the town, and were narrow enough to be easily commanded by a small body of defenders. The whole of the interior of the gulf formed a magnificent harbour.

At the back of the city, on the north-western or land side, there was situated a long lagoon. This had formerly been separated from the sea by a narrow isthmus, but Hasdrubal, who had, before his assassination, been aiming at royal power, had determined to make New Carthage his royal city, and in consequence as nearly impregnable as possible.

He had therefore cut a channel through this narrow isthmus, thus allowing the sea and the lagoon to join. And then he had bridged the channel with a wide and excellent bridge. This bridge was a short way from the gates of the city, and was the sole means of land communication with the rest of Spain. The gates were strongly fortified, and inside and near the walls were erected commodious barracks for the troops; a little beyond these barracks rose, on an eminence, a well-designed and formidable-looking citadel, above which proudly floated the Carthaginian ensign.

The town, as has been said, was hilly, and its designer had

taken advantage of the natural features by making it as beautiful as possible. On every hill top stood a magnificent marble temple. On the most commanding hill of all, that which was due east, was reared the glorious temple to Æsculapius, while those to Moloch and Tanais or Tanith occupied other prominent sites. In every square and at every street corner were placed the most exquisite and costly statues, some of the purest of Parian marbles, and others of solid silver. Some of the richest silver mines in the then-known world lay close to Carthagena. The supply of the metal was apparently inexhaustible and unbounded. For there were not only no such sailors, but no such skilful miners in those days as the Phœnicians, who had, like the Greeks, formed peaceful settlements in Spain long before the first of the Punic wars,

By means of pipes coming under the lagoon from various high hills on the mainland, the supply of water in the town was abundant, and tinkling fountains, shaded by splendid plane trees, formed on every side picturesque rendezvous for the gossips of the town. In addition there were many excellent wells on the island itself which never ran dry.

For the situation of his own palace and court, in whose gardens we made the acquaintance of Hannibal's daughter Elissa, Hasdrubal, who was eminently a man of genius, had selected the most advantageous site on the island, by taking in the whole of a flat-topped hill on the western side which overlooked the sea and country and all the city, except the temple to Æsculapius. Here he had reared the most beautiful and luxuriously-furnished edifice of which the architects of those days were capable; and from what Carthage was, and what Syracuse was, we know that their abilities were great. Graceful colonnades, wonderful mosaic-paved corridors and walls were everywhere; gorgeous saloons, filled with pictures and statues, formed banqueting halls or audience chambers; while the richly-furnished sleeping apartments had been designed with a view to comfort and æstheticism combined.

In one of these, in front of an open window facing south, the carved lattice fretwork of which was made of the sweet-scented

cedar of Lebanon, and out of which she cast many anxious glances, stood Elissa, attiring herself as gorgeously as possible with the assistance of Cleandra, an old white-headed warrior in armour being also in attendance. The door of the apartment was closed and barred, and in addition heavy curtains were drawn across it, so that there could be no chance of a word that was said within the room being heard outside.

"And so, my good Gisco," said Elissa, while putting on a magnificent chain of gold and emeralds, "thou dost estimate the numbers of the fighting men, leaving the rowers on one side, at about eight thousand, dost thou not? I should have thought there had been more. Why, just see how their spears glisten in the sun where they are crowded together on the decks."

"I did not say they had only eight thousand men. Lady Elissa," answered the old Prefect Gisco, a faithful and rugged old retainer of Hamilcar and Hannibal, who had risen from the ranks and was now the captain of the garrison of Carthagena. "They must, calculating a hundred and twentyfive marines to each ship, have at least considerably over nine thousand fighting men with them; but, as they would leave at least a thousand on board as a guard to the ships, they would, if they strove to make a landing, disembark, say, about eight But they will not seek to land this evening by thousand. force without a parley first, and even if they should do so, we could defend the two entrances to the harbour to the last. They could never get in to-night without fighting at a disadvantage. We have, after all, got six hundred well seasoned soldiers, who will take a lot of killing; and then we have three hundred more of the wounded and convalescents, who came down two months ago from Saguntum. They can bear a hand, and a very useful one too, as many of them are Balearic slingers, who will prove most deadly to men in boats."

"And what about to-morrow, oh, most sapient Gisco, when all our men are dead?" asked Elissa, smiling the while, and examining her pearly teeth in the mirror of polished and burnished gold, which Cleandra was holding up before her. "But I agree with thee; I do not think this Adherbal will dare to attack Carthaginians without a parley. He will first try to obtain possession of myself and New Carthage in some other way. No," she continued, "we must have no fighting. We can do better than that, I think, and yet save the situation both for Hannibal and for the country's welfare. It will be far better than Carthaginians fighting against Carthaginians. I have, too, other and better use to which to place those mercenaries in the ships with Adherbal."

The old soldier looked at the young Regent with a puzzled expression, and waited for an explanation. Elissa smiled enigmatically.

"Listen carefully now, oh! Gisco," she added, while putting up each of her little feet in turn upon an ivory and ebony stool for Cleandra to fasten her jewelled sandals. "Listen, and I will disclose to thee the details of my plot, by which I believe that we shall avoid any fighting, for I think by this time to-morrow it will be a case of the biter bit. But before I tell thee my plans, inform me, my good Gisco, how much time we have before it will be possible for Adherbal to land?"

Gisco looked out of the window over the gulf to the sea.

"The current that sets this evening out of the lagoon and the gulf is just now flowing out to sea with its greatest force, the ships are anchored at a considerable distance from the shore, and the breeze is blowing strong off the land. Even if he were to attempt to row ashore now, Adherbal could not reach the booms under an hour. He is evidently aware of that fact, and is waiting for the slack tide, for I see a large galley, with a flag in the stern, lying alongside the largest of the ships."

"Then we have plenty of time," said Elissa, and rapidly she disclosed her plans to Gisco. Then she sent him off to convey the necessary instructions to the officers, who were waiting for him outside, bidding him return instantly and have a herald waiting for her with a State barge and a crew of swift rowers at the steps below the palace.

Meanwhile, she dictated a letter to Cleandra, which she

sealed with Hannibal's signet-ring, given to her by Maharbal. Another letter she wrote herself, and signed with her own seal of office as Regent and Governor of New Carthage.

By the time these two letters were ready, old Gisco had returned to inform her that the State galley was waiting at the steps.

"And further," he added with a smile, "all the preparations for the fulfilment of thy clever plans are ready, oh! Lady Elissa. Ah, me! to think of the cunning contained in that little woman's head of thine!" And he looked admiringly at her, while the young girl flushed with pleasure at the compliment.

"Come, Cleandra," she called, "we must go. But first let us see what they have done for poor Maharbal."

Maharbal had been carried in by Gisco's orders, and was now lying on a couch in a comfortable apartment, attended by Melania and the Princess Cœcilia. A learned leech was feeling his pulse, but they saw that he was still quite unconscious.

Elissa heaved a sigh, then beckoning to her aunt to follow, left the room.

"My aunt," she said, changing from the soft Punic tongue, in which she had been conversing with the old Prefect Gisco, to the Iberian or Spanish dialect, which the ladies of the household, being all either half or wholly Iberians, used habitually among themselves; "my aunt, grave tidings are to hand, or, rather, both grave and good tidings. Saguntum has fallen, and Hannibal is wounded. The shouting we heard in the town, as we were surprised by Maharbal, was doubtless caused by his informing the guards as he passed the city gates of the fall of that city. It is uncertain "-here she was purposely deceiving her aunt, whose tongue she feared—"exactly how long it is since the town of Saguntum fell; but about a week more or less, so I judge from a letter I have received from my father Hannibal. Further, we may expect to see some of his advanced guard of returning troops almost at once; perchance indeed this very day some of them may arrive. But that is not the grave part of my news-a large fleet hath arrived from Carthage, and is now lying anchored without the Gulf. It is under the command of Adherbal, the son of Hanno, one of a family that never bore good will to my father or my uncle, thy husband's house. I fear they come with no good design. Nevertheless, we must make a show of entertaining the General Adherbal and his principal followers as well; and I am about to invite them to come here and to pass the night. Therefore, while I am away, I pray thee make suitable preparations for a becoming repast, and see ye that chambers are prepared. As the evenings are now long, and it is, moreover, fresher without than within, I pray thee also to be kind enough to have the repast spread upon the western balcony beneath the colonnade."

The foolish little princess, in a flutter of excitement, was about to ask a thousand questions; but Elissa, giving her no time to talk, merely waved her hand and departed, accompanied by Cleandra and the Prefect Gisco.

Passing through a postern gate in the wall of the palace, they descended by a wide flight of marble stairs to a landing-stage at the foot, where was lying moored a magnificent, gilded barge, the prow of which was shaped like the head and wings of a swan. By the side of this a gorgeously-clad herald awaited them. He bowed low as the party approached, and the youthful Regent and Governor of New Carthage beckoned him to join them, out of earshot of the sailors who formed the crew.

"Sir Herald," she said, delivering to him the two letters, "thou wilt accompany us to the steps at the mouth of the harbour where we shall land. Thou wilt then proceed to the ship of the Admiral of the fleet which is lying without the harbour, and deliver to him these two letters with my greetings. In reply to all questions make only one answer, namely, that tidings have come that the city of Saguntum fell over a week ago—fell more than a week ago, dost understand? With reference to everything else, plead ignorance."

Entering the barge, followed by Cleandra and Gisco, who gave a short word of command to the crew, they were, a

noment later, being borne swiftly down the waters of the gulf, nd very soon arrived at the disembarking steps on the south ide of the entrance to the harbour, where a large body of pearmen, who had been standing about on the quay, fell into ank as they saw the State barge approaching. As the young irl disembarked, they received her with the same salute as hey would have given to their Commander-in-Chief Hannibal pimself.

The young girl acknowledged the salute by a bow, and never, perhaps, had she looked so noble and dignified. Her iress was calculated to enhance her beauty and dignity. was attired in a chiton of purple silk, with a broad hem at the pottom, which, as well as a band at the edge of the looselanging sleeves, was of white silk, trimmed with rich, golden oraid. On her dark tresses was now poised a small diadem of gold, inlaid with rubies and pearls. Two large drops of single pearls were in her ears, while on her arms, both above and pelow the elbow, were clasped costly bands of purest gold. On her slender fingers she wore many beautiful rings, while cound her neck hung the long chain of emeralds, which has peen already mentioned. Cleandra also was upon this ocasion very richly attired in white and silver, which suited well her fair complexion. Her jewels and ornaments were likewise costly and becoming; for although by the fortune of war she had become a slave, she was ever allowed by Elissa, who loved her, to dress in a style befitting the princely Iberian family from which she had sprung.

After acknowledging the salute, Elissa walked along the ranks of the soldiers, addressing a word here and there, complimenting one upon his soldierly appearance, and another on the brilliancy of his arms and accoutrements. By this tact, and the gentle ways which she had always displayed in her dealings with the soldiery left under her command, she had long ago won the heart of every man among the troops, and there was not that day an officer or man present who would not have willingly fought for her to the death.

When she had concluded her inspection, she caused Gisco

to form up the troops close round her in a circle. Owing to their numbers, this circle was many files in depth; but the young Regent wished all to hear what she had to say.

A bundle of merchandise which was lying on the quay she caused to be placed in the middle of the circle of warriors, and, mounting thereon, she addressed the men:

"Soldiers of Carthage, I have glorious news to announce to you. Maharbal, the Prefect of the Numidian Horse, hath ridden through with tidings from our General and Commander-in-chief, my father Hannibal, that he hath captured Saguntum; and not only hath he put all the garrison to the sword, but seized an enormous booty in treasures and slaves, of which booty, no doubt, you, my faithful garrison, will receive your portion. The number of female Greek slaves captured is, so Hannibal writes, almost unlimited."

Upon hearing these words, the assembled troops broke into such a burst of cheering that the crews on the ships lying out in the roads wondered exceedingly at the cause. But Elissa had purposely appealed to the baser feelings of her audience. Having allowed a few minutes for the natural ebullition of feeling, the fair young orator raised her hand as a sign, and instantly silence was restored.

"I grieve," she continued, "to say that our losses have been heavy, and that Hannibal is sorely, although not dangerously, wounded. But, soldiers of Carthage, a worse danger threatens Hannibal; a worse danger threatens all of us, guardians here of our country's honour; a far worse danger threatens me myself than that of an open foe, and that danger is from yonder powerful fleet, bearing our own country's flag, now lying at anchor but a distance of some five or six stades from our shore. Alas! that it should be so; but it is true; deceit is hidden beneath those banners of Carthage, dishonour and fraud menace us and our country alike from the warships upon which they are flying. Men of Carthage, brave soldiers of Hannibal, will ye help me to frustrate that fraud, will ye assist me to defeat the schemes of dishonour which are laid, not only against us all collectively, as the keepers for Hannibal of

New Carthage, but more particularly against that which it is meditated to put upon me personally? A plot hath been hatched against the honour of a young girl who hath only your brave arms and noble hearts to rely upon for her safety. Will we help me?"

"We will! we will! We will die for thee and thine honour, Elissa; we will die for Hannibal. Confusion to the miscreants!"

Such were the hoarse cries that rose from every throat, while in their rage the soldiers beat upon their shields with their spears for want of an enemy upon whom they could wreak their fury.

Once more the maiden, whose cheeks had reddened, and whose heart beat tumultuously at the noise and the shouting, raised her shapely hand, and again silence fell upon the crowd.

"I thank ye all, my soldiers. I thank each and every one." "Now hearken attentively to She spoke with visible emotion. my words, for time is short. Our forces are small, while those on yonder fleet are large. Yet, indeed, I know that, should it come to fighting, ye will fight most valiantly, and to the death if need be. But I am not prepared, nor do I intend, unless the worst comes to the worst, that ye should throw away your lives in an unequal battle with yonder mercenaries. Nay, all of ye have long to live, if ye but implicitly trust in me and obey unquestioningly the commands that will be put upon you. Thus, even should the orders that ye will shortly receive appear unmeaning and futile, and should a long night and morning of apparently useless marching and work be your portion, yet rely upon me. Nothing that ye do will be without cause, but all for the common welfare.

"For seeing our weakness, if we would not be crushed, we must meet guile with guile, deceit with deceit. And we will see by to-morrow's morn whose plans are the most successfully laid; those of the crafty general clad in golden armour, whom I can now see stepping into his galley from the flag ship yonder, or those of Hannibal's daughter, the young maiden who now asks you to trust her."

"We trust thee! we trust thee, oh, Elissa!" cried all the soldiers vociferously.

"Then, that is good. One command I lay upon ye all, officers and men alike: avoid all discourse, if possible, with any who should land from the ships. But if, from their superior rank, ye cannot avoid answering the questions of any then say simply this, no more nor less, that Saguntum fell more than a week ago, and that part of Hannibal's troops are expected to march into Carthagena shortly. I have done Now, Captain Gisco, wilt thou give orders to reform the ranks tell off the troops for the guard of honour, and carry out the instructions that thou knowest?"

Swiftly, and in order, the troops reassumed their origina formation, while Elissa, somewhat heated and fatigued after her efforts of oratory, had the bale of merchandise upon which she had been standing, moved to the water's edge, and seated herself where she could get the sea breeze and watch what was going on outside the gulf.

Meanwhile, the boom having been opened wide enough to admit of the passage of boats, the herald had passed through with the barge of State and conveyed the two letters to the hexireme, which he rightly conjectured to be the ship of the commander of the fleet. He was met at the gangway by an officer, who instantly conveyed him to where Adherbal was sitting under a crimson awning. He was surrounded by several officers clad like himself in golden armour, which, with the rich wine cups standing about, betokened that they were al members of the body of *lite* already mentioned, and known in Carthage as the Sacred Band.

Adherbal himself was a dark, very powerfully built, and handsome man of about thirty. He was continually laughing and showing his white teeth, and seemed to be generally wel contented with his own person. But his smiles were too many, and his bonhomic often deceptive, for, although he was personally brave, he was nevertheless at heart a thorough villain. His wealth being unbounded, he had been hithert always able to indulge to the utmost in the debauchery is

which he revelled and there was no baseness or fraud to which, by means of his wealth, he had not frequently descended, in the pursuit of women of immaculate life and high station in Carthage. He was the leader of the most dissolute band of young nobles in all Carthage, and his high rank and station alone as Commander of the Sacred Band, and as the head of the now paramount family in that city, had hitherto been the means of his immunity from punishment in any way, either for his own notorious escapades or for those of the followers who consorted with him, and who, under his protection, vied with each other in imitating his iniquities. Among these companions it had frequently been his boast that there was no woman, no matter of what rank or family, upon whom he had cast his eyes, who had not, sooner or later, either by force or fraud, become his victim. And these boasts were, unfortunately, true: many a family having been made miserable, many a happy home made wretched by his unbridled license and wickedness. It was during a drinking bout to which he had invited the Roman envoys, and when he was boasting as usual in his cups, that Ariston, one of his companions, jealous of his success where some woman, whom he himself fancied. was concerned, had taunted him before all those assembled.

"Oh, yes!" said Ariston banteringly, "we all know that thou art a sad dog, Adherbal, and that here in Carthage thou wilt soon be compelled to weep like Alexander, because thou hast no more worlds left to conquer. For soon, doubtless, either all the maidens will be dead for love of thee, or else all the fathers of families or the husbands of pretty wives will have destroyed them to preserve them from thee. And yet, for all that, I venture to state that there is one Carthaginian family, whose dishonour thou wouldst more willingly compass than any other, where even such a seductive dog as thyself can never hope for success, and whose honour, despite all thine arts, shall always remain inviolable. And yet, if report says true, there is a beautiful young maiden in that family, one so lovely. indeed, that not one of all those who have hitherto felt thy kisses can be mentioned in the same breath with her. But she is not for thee, oh, Adherbal! thou most glorious votary of Tanais; no, this is game, my noble falcon, at which even thou darest not to fly."

"For whom, then, is this pretty pigeon reserved, my good Ariston? Is it, perchance, for thine own dovecote that she hath the distinguished honour of being reserved? Well, here's to thy success!"

Thus he answered, scornfully tossing off a huge bumper of wine.

"No, not for me either," replied Ariston; "it is not for me to rashly venture in where the bold Adherbal dares not even place a foot within the doorway. But I am sorry for thee, Adherbal, for the pretty bird would well have suited thy gilded cage in the suburbs of the Megara."

"I will wager thee five hundred talents that thou liest, Ariston," replied the other, inflamed with wine, and irritated at the banter which was making the other boon companions laugh at his expense. "I will wager thee five hundred silver talents," he repeated, "that there is no family in Carthage where, if it so please me, I dare not place a foot; there is no quarry upon whom I dare not swoop, if I so choose, ay, nor fail to bear off successfully to mine eyrie in the Megara. But name this most noble family, pray, name this peerless beauty of thine, and we will see," and he laughed defiantly, and took another deep draught of wine.

"I said not a family in Carthage, I said a Carthaginian family," answered Ariston, purposely provoking and tantalising him. "I spoke of a more beautiful girl than either thou or any one at this festive board hath ever yet seen."

But now the curiosity of all the other convives, including the Roman envoys, was aroused.

"The name, the name!" they cried tumultuously; "name the family and name the girl."

"The family is that of Hannibal; the girl whose favours even Adherbal dareth not seek to obtain is Elissa, Hannibal's daughter."

"Hannibal! Hannibal's daughter!"

A hushed awe fell upon the assembled guests as they repeated these words. Then they burst out into a roar of drunken laughter, and taunted the boaster.

"Ha! he hath got thee there, Adherbal; thou hadst better pay up thy five hundred talents to Ariston at once and look pleasant, and seek thy revenge another day."

But Adherbal, furious at the banter and the mention of the hated name of Hannibal, had sprung to his feet, wine cup in hand.

"I double my wager," he cried; "not five hundred, but one thousand talents do I now stake, that by some means or other I gain absolute possession of the girl. Nay, further, I solemnly vow, by Astarte, Moloch, and Melcareth, to whom I pour out this libation of wine, to bring her father Hannibal's head also, and lay it at the feet of these, our guests, the Roman envoys. I do not think that, seeing the mission upon which they have arrived in Carthage, I could promise them a more acceptable present. But secrecy must be preserved."

The speech was received with deafening applause by all present, all being of the anti-Barcine party, and ways and means were immediately discussed.

CHAPTER IV.

FOUR CARTHAGINIAN NOBLES.

ADHERBAL and his companions received the herald insolently, without rising.

"Well, fellow," he said, "how comes it that thou darest to trust thy person upon my ship when thy companions yonder have thought fit to bar the entrance to their harbour to Carthaginian ships?"

Although the herald's face flushed, he made an obeisance,

but no other reply than:

"I bring two letters for my lord."

"From whom are they, fellow?"

- "They were given me for my lord by the Regent and Governor of New Carthage."
 - "And who is the Regent and Governor of New Carthage?"
- "Elissa, my lord, daughter of Hannibal, the Commander-in-Chief and Governor-General in Iberia."
- "Elissa, thou knave, thou liest, by Baal Hammon. Why, from all reports she is but a girl. How old is she?"

"I do not know the Regent's age, my lord."

"And are both these letters from this precious Regent?"

"I know not, my lord."

"Wilt answer me this at once, or for all thy fine clothes I will have thee ducked in the water alongside. Was it by the orders of this quean of a girl that those booms were thrown across the harbour mouths?"

"I have not the honour of being in the Regent's confidence, my lord. Maybe that my lord will get the information that he requires on perusal of these two letters which I have the honour to present to his lordship."

And with another obeisance the herald presented them to

Adherbal, who tossed them carelessly on the table before him, and called for a cup of wine.

A loud laugh from one of the young nobles seated negligently close by here interrupted the colloquy; he was evidently in a jovial mood, and in no awe of the general.

"Upon my word, Adherbal, I think the fellow's right, and by Astarte, the sweet goddess of love, he got thee that time. He seems a model of discretion, at all events. I think that while thou art discussing thy stoup of wine. I had better take him in hand a bit and see if I can make him a little more communicative. Look here, my fine fellow, how many women have they up in the palace there on the hill, and are they fond of love, and are they pretty, and are there any men there making love to them, and who is the lover of this Regent and daughter, or I don't know what you call her, of New Carthage? And is there any chance for a good-looking fellow like me, Imlico, the son of Mago, or for an ugly fellow like that Ariston vonder, son of-who art thou the son of, Ariston? the wine hath caused me to forget completely thy distinguished parentage. Or again, think ye, Sir Herald, that there is to be found within this precious town a distinguished-looking female who could reciprocate the loving glances of my portly friend here. the noble Zeno, formerly of Rhodes? A very firebrand of love is Zeno, and the very prince of good fellows. I daresay thou art a good enough fellow thyself, by the bye. Take a cup of wine and think of all my questions and answer them afterwards. Take thou mine own goblet, 'tis but newly filled; and are we not both Carthaginians? I wager thee 'tis the first time ever thou drankest from a golden cup belonging to one of the Sacred Band."

And he handed the cup to the herald, who, fearful of offending, took and drank slowly, sip by sip, as if he were a connoisseur, thus obviating the necessity for the reply which Imlico awaited patiently.

"Sayest thou nought?" said the somewhat stout noble called Zeno. "Tell me, Sir Herald, what is the news from Saguntum?"

"Saguntum fell more than a week ago," answered the herald readily.

"Saguntum fallen, by Pluto!" exclaimed Adherbal, who had been getting moody and sulky over his wine, and was sitting with a frown on his face.

"And what news of Hannibal?" asked Ariston, thinking that his turn had now come for a question.

"Some of Hannibal's troops are expected in from Saguntum very shortly," answered the herald once more, with equal readiness.

"Hannibal's troops coming in shortly! This is getting interesting with a vengeance!" said Adherbal. "I think I had better read the letters without further delay."

Taking a jewelled dagger from his waist, he rapidly cut the silken threads which, fastened down with a seal, closely held each of the letters. He examined the signatures.

"I suppose ye drunken fellows would like to know what they are both about?" he observed familiarly. "Will ye that I read them aloud? One of them is, I see, from Hannibal, yea, the mighty Hannibal himself! How knew he I was here? The other is likely to be much more interesting, it is apparently from my lovely mistress that is to be, for it is signed and sealed by Elissa, Regent and Governor of New Carthage. Which shall I read first?"

"Elissa's, of course," cried out the three semi-drunken nobles of the Sacred Band.

"Then I shall disappoint you," said Adherbal, "and keep Elissa's letter to the last. Sweets should always come after solid food. So for Hannibal first, and may curses light upon his father's grave."

Utterly careless of the presence of the herald, or the mercenaries and officials of the ship, who from curiosity had been thronging round as close as they dared, to stare at the herald, Adherbal read loudly, but in a voice slightly thickened from the effects of drink, the letter which Elissa had dictated and sealed with her father's signet:—

"In the name of the great Melcareth, the God of Tyre, of Sidon, and of Carthage, greeting.

"From Hannibal, the son of Hamilcar, Commander-in-Chief and Governor-General of the Carthaginian Provinces in Iberia, to the Lord Adherbal, the son of Hanno.

"My lord, I captured the town of Saguntum some seven days since, and learned from some Roman prisoners that thou wert coming to New Carthage with a fleet containing numerous troops for my reinforcement. I thank thee for this mark of friendship, and the more so as I was not aware that thou hadst forgotten or forgiven the old party feud between thy father, Hanno, and my father, Hamilcar. I shall be glad of thy reinforcement, for this siege hath wasted my troops sorely, and much fatigued those that are not wounded, the greater part of whom I am sending to New Carthage at once to recruit after the fatigues of constant battle.

"As, owing to a wound, I shall myself remain here in occupation of Saguntum with but a small force for some time. I shall be glad of thy immediate presence hither, with all thy force to help, in case of a rising of the Celtiberians, to serve as Therefore, after resting thyself and thine officers for a day or two at New Carthage, where my daughter, Elissa, my sister-in-law, Cœcilia, Princess of the Cissanians, and the various ladies of my daughter's household will give thee and thine all becoming entertainment in my palace, I beg thee to proceed with thy fleet hither at once. This movement will be also vastly to the interest of thyself, of thine officers, and of the soldiers accompanying thee. For the amount of our spoils of war is so immense that the like of it hath never been seen in any war of which we have any record. Leaving on one side the enormous amount of gold, silver, and valuables; the number of young Greek women, whom we hold at present prisoners in our camp, exceeds by at least three to one the number of the whole army, and by about six to one the number of the unwounded or the convalescents. All the troops, among whom these Greek women have been divided, are already, owing to the expense of their keep, anxious to sell them for ready money, of which, owing to the lack of remittances of pay from Carthage, they are greatly in need. Many of the younger Greek girls are of excessive beauty, and as my soldiers will be prepared to sell them for a small sum, thou canst easily see what a large profit there is to be made by thine officers and soldiers should they come to Saguntum and buy them. For when the ships of thy fleet return, after due repose in Saguntum, the slaves can be sent in the hands of merchants to Carthage and sold again. Further, I have very large cargoes of valuables of every description to remit to the Government of Carthage, of which naturally thou, my lord, and all thine officers and crews would retain considerable shares. Therefore, my lord, I repeat that thy coming to Saguntum without delay is advisable, for the amount of booty we have is enormous beyond all calculation.

"(Signed and Sealed) HANNIBAL."

After the reading aloud of this epistle, there was much laughter and jesting among the four nobles on the deck at Hannibal's expense. They made fun of his apparent gullibility with reference to the object of their expedition; they indulged in the lewdest of jests about the ladies left in the palace, with whom, apparently so innocently, Hannibal suggested they were to stay for a few days, and discussed the necessity, if troops were to arrive from Saguntum, of going ashore at once. They talked openly, for they were all flushed with wine, of the ease with which the object of their visit to New Carthage seemed likely to be accomplished, and how, further, they would easily seize and capture Hannibal himself at Saguntum. Meanwhile, the troops who were crowded on the decks around were listening to every word.

"Now, let us see Elissa, my little sweetheart's, letter," said Adherbal gaily. It ran as follows:—

[&]quot;In the name of Tanais, Queen of Heaven, Queen of Love, Queen of the Seas, greeting.

[&]quot;From Elissa, daughter of Hannibal, Regent and Governor of New Carthage, to Adherbal, the son of Hanno.

"My lord, we are but a few poor women here, and regret that we have not to-night the wherewithal to entertain a large force in the place. Further, seeing my lord's ships in the distance, I imagined that a Roman fleet was coming to attack New Carthage in revenge for the siege of Saguntum. Therefore, I caused booms to be drawn across the entrances to the harbour. But a letter from Hannibal hath informed me of thy coming. To-morrow morning, should my lord wish to bring his fleet into the harbour, the booms will be removed. In the meantime, will my lord, bringing such nobles and retainers as are becoming to his dignity with him, honour our poor palace with his noble presence?

"My lord, we have but a few troops here, or would have drawn up an army to salute thee on arrival. Some of Hannibal's troops, however, will arrive to-morrow morning, some also may arrive to-night. To-morrow we will hold a grand review in my lord's honour. My lord, thou art welcome to New Carthage. The sight of a few noblemen of rank from our mother-country will be in sooth a delight to our eyes.

"We inhabitants of Iberia have not, alas, yet learned all the arts to charm that are owned by the ladies of Carthage; but our hearts are warmly inclined in advance to those who come from our own country. My lord, it is for thee and the nobles of thy suite to come and teach us what demeanour we had best assume to be most agreeable. We are young, we are innocent and untutored provincials, but we are prepared nevertheless willingly to learn the ways of Carthage.

"Will my lord send by my herald an immediate reply to say if we may expect his noble presence with us to-night? I am awaiting my herald, and my lord himself, on the quay.

"(Sealed and Signed)

"Elissa, Regent and Governor of New Carthage."

There was great excitement among the four dissolute young nobles, who wished to go ashore at once upon the reading of this letter. The herald, who had been trembling in his shoes for his own safety, was thereupon instantly despatched with a hasty note to say that Adherbal with the three nobles and a few men of his suite were coming ashore without delay. For, fatuous individuals as they were, they were completely taken in by Elissa's letter, and imagined that they had but to go on shore to capture, not perhaps the town of New Carthage that night, but certainly the hearts of all the principal ladies in the palace. And it must be owned that both her own epistle, and that purporting to come from Hannibal, were sufficient to mislead less self-confident schemers than Adherbal and his friends. But the heart of the leader was full of the deepest guile, for all his apparent simplicity, and he laid his plans before landing.

Before the arrival of the herald at the landing steps, Adherbal and his party accordingly started from their ship also. They came in two large boats, the first containing the four nobles, the second, some forty men with two officers who were to form his escort. These boats arrived simultaneously at the quay steps, where a guard of honour, drawn up in two lines, consisting of one hundred spearmen, awaited them and greeted them with the highest salute. When they had passed down between the ranks, they found Elissa, with Cleandra standing a pace behind her, and, behind them again, Gisco and other officers waiting to receive them.

Smiling sweetly, the young girl advanced confidently to greet them.

"Welcome to New Carthage," she said, "oh citizens of Old Carthage."

Adherbal, bowing with all the grace for which he was famous, took her hand and respectfully placed his forehead upon it in the Punic style; then he presented his three companions, Imlico, Zeno, and Ariston, as his friends, and Elissa in return presented Cleandra.

The beauty of the two ladies quite astonished the four young nobles; but it was with their eyes only that they could speak what they felt.

CHAPTER V.

PLOTS AND COUNTER-PLOTS.

DESPITE the confidence with which Hannibal's daughter had advanced to greet the new-comers, it is not to be supposed that she felt as bold as she looked. Her heart was beating violently as, with a smile upon her lips, she greeted the gorgeous strangers glittering in their golden armour. Nor is this to be wondered at, for well she knew the terrible risks that she ran, and the perfidy hidden in the breast of the handsome young Adherbal, who was now gazing upon her with such ardent admiration in his bold, piercing eyes, that, in spite of herself, she felt herself blushing a little as she lowered her own lids before his too evident admiration of her youthful charms.

But she speedily diverted his attention from herself by suggesting that the nobles should follow her in their own boats to her palace steps, saying that she would lead the way. She purposely did not ask them to accompany her, for she wished to have time to think and talk with Cleandra on the way home.

"What dost thou think of them, Cleandra?" she inquired, as soon as they started.

"I think that they are all very handsome young men, and most beautifully attired; Adherbal himself and Imlico are especially handsome, and they seem to have pleasant ways. I do not think it possible they can have the evil designs that we imagine." For Cleandra, who was young and impressionable, had been caught at once by a few pretty compliments that the versatile Imlico had already found time to pay her.

"Be on thy guard in spite of their pleasant ways, dear Cleandra," replied the younger and more prudent girl; "for

what is the use of being forewarned by Hannibal if we are not forearmed? Nothing can make me trust them. Why, think ye, are they come hither with all their fleet had their designs been good, instead of proceeding at once to help Hannibal at Saguntum?"

This reply was convincing, and the rest of the way to the palace steps was passed by the girls in silence.

Here, and about the palace itself, there was purposely, by Elissa's orders, but a very small guard waiting to receive them.

The Carthaginians, arriving with their two boats, noticed this fact with satisfaction. Their leader sprang to shore in time to gallantly offer his hand to Elissa, which she gracefully accepted, apologising at the same time with apparent naïveté.

"Thou seest, General Adherbal, that we have but a poor show of retainers with whom to welcome thee here. But the reason is plain. Being but a woman, alone in the palace, and having ever before me the traditions of the horrible outrages committed by the mercenaries, who revolted in Hamilcar's and thy father Hanno's time, I prefer to employ all the extra soldiers about the city walls. I only, during Hannibal's absence, maintain a guard of some forty men in all to protect the approaches, the gates, and the palace itself. For what have I to fear?"

'What, indeed?" replied Adherbal, taking the opportunity to gently press the little hand that rested on his arm. "Where beauty and virtue such as thine reign supreme, fair lady Elissa, what harm could come to the palace that contains such a treasure?" And he looked into her eyes as if he meant his words.

Elissa, paying no attention to the compliment, continued:

"I see, my lord, that thou hast some baggage with thee. We have, I trust, despite our small retinue, enough men to spare thy followers the trouble of disembarking it themselves, which would be but an inhospitable proceeding. Further, our few soldiers can entertain thy followers this evening."

"Baggage? no, my lady Elissa, of that we have but little. Yet have I ventured to bring ashore, as an unworthy offering to my fair hostess, a few flagons of the most famous vintages of the old wine for which the vineyards of Utica are famous. Wilt thou deign to accept it for thyself and thine household?"

"Most willingly, noble Adherbal, will I accept thy kindly gift. It will be, indeed, a pleasant change to the household after the thin wines of Iberia; and, though we ladies are but small drinkers, we shall look forward to pledging our noble guests in a cup ourselves this very evening."

Upon reaching the head of the marble stairs, the herald, who had returned with the State barge, sounded a clarion blast. Instantly the postern gate flew open, the sentry saluting as the party entered, to find, standing upon the porticos of the palace awaiting them, the Princess Cœcilia and Melania in their grandest robes, with several pretty female slaves behind them. Adherbal exchanged with Ariston and Zeno a meaning glance, which they both perfectly understood; but Imlico was so taken up with Cleandra, to whom he was making violent love, that he did not catch the leader's meaning looks. Elissa, however, noticed them, and explained that, as there were so few men available, what men there were would be exclusively employed in entertaining his own escort.

The Princess Cœcilia was all smiles. She looked, as she really was, delighted to see some strangers of the male sex, and those strangers, too, of such evident high rank, and wearing such gorgeous accoutrements. She was an exceedingly goodnatured, but a foolish young woman, and she showed her folly in the extra warmth of her welcome. Finding that none of the other three nobles seemed to respond very much, or rather that Zeno responded much more warmly than the others to her politeness, it was upon him chiefly that she showered her attentions. As for Ariston, from the moment that he set eyes upon Melania, he could look at nothing else.

The guests were promptly shown to gorgeous and most luxuriously furnished sleeping apartments, with the intimation that a collation awaited them, as soon as they were ready, on the west verandah. In a short time, therefore, the nobles, all having doffed their armour, with the exception of a dagger in

a golden waist-belt, appeared in most beautiful silken raiment, the very latest fashion from Carthage. And just as the sun was beginning to set over the western horizon, the eight convives sat down to a sumptuous repast, served by light-footed female attendants. They reclined on divans at a round table, Adherbal on the right side of Elissa, then the princess, next to her Zeno, then Melania and Ariston, next to whom came Cleandra and Imlico.

From the situation in which Adherbal was placed, he could see the road leading to the bridge across the isthmus, and also the far end of the bridge itself, the nearer half being hidden by the walls. He could also, by looking to his right, see the heights across the lagoon to the north of the city. And although he said nothing, he noticed, nevertheless, vaguely that there was a constant influx of troops coming from the landward side, and that further, there was a large encampment of tents being rapidly reared on the hills to the north. But it did not strike him as being of any importance. He thought merely that they were some Iberian levies. He devoted himself equally to Elissa and the wine, which was his own, and excellent, and the more wine he drank, the more pressing he became in his attentions to his hostess, who, not quite understanding the customs of Carthage, very soon felt an alarm which she took care to conceal.

Both Cleandra and Melania were also slightly alarmed as the dinner wore on; but Cleandra, having taken two cups of wine, began to have her head turned by the compliments and ready tongue of Imlico, who had certainly made an impression upon her unattached affections. Melania was far more cautious with Ariston, whom she thoroughly disliked from the first; but the young widow, the Princess Cœcilia, made quite as much love to Zeno as he to her, and, long before the enormous number of courses which it was customary to serve in those days had appeared; she had, on the pretence of feeling a little faint, risen from the feast and taken Zeno off with her to show him the garden. And her faintness must have lasted a long time, for she never came back! In the meantime, course after

course appeared, and the wine cup circulated freely; but still, until darkness fell upon the land, Adherbal could see troops marching into the city, and still he noticed rows upon rows of tents rising on the northern hills.

At length, when all had moved away from the table, the night fell. Adherbal had now become loving in the extreme, and clasped Elissa's hands in his and drew her to his side. Coyly, with a slight resistance, she allowed herself to be so drawn, and coyly, too, but determinedly, averted her head when he sought to embrace her. He complained of her cruelty.

"It is too soon, my lord, too soon," she uttered shyly. "Why, I have not even yet known thee one whole day." She added laughingly, "Although I am willing to learn the manners of Carthage, I cannot learn them quite all at once."

The wine he had drunk made him brutal. In spite of her striving to hold back, he held the girl closer to him and kissed her averted face. And then by force he turned her face to him and kissed her passionately on the lips.

Despite the loathing with which his embrace inspired her, she did not, as she was merely acting a part, resist at all violently. He could not, however, see the eyes gleaming with hatred in the darkness; he only felt the warmth of the little mouth, and, as she had not struggled much and had uttered no cry, he considered the battle was half won already. He unmasked his battery without futher delay.

"Elissa, dearest Elissa, why shouldst thou resist me? Dost thou not know that I adore thee? I have come here from Carthage simply because of hearing of thy charms, for by Astarte, Queen of Love! I vow that I loved thee in advance; but hearsay is not one-thousandth part of the reality. Beloved, come to me, for thou wilt and shalt be mine."

With his powerful arms he clasped her to him so closely that she could not move, while he could feel her fluttering heart beating against his breast. She temporised, concealing her rage for fear.

"My lord," she whispered softly, "thou knowest that I am

much flattered at having attracted thy attention thus; but still thou must consider me and my position a little. I am supreme here at present; and therefore what would Cleandra and Melania, who are but my slaves, say if they could see me now? Hence, if thou lovest me as thou sayest, yet release me, I pray thee. If thou choosest, thou canst still hold my hand. But be cautious."

He released her, then said abruptly and somewhat angrily:

"Very well, my pretty one, I release thee for the present, for know this, that whether thou wilt or not, thou art mine. this palace is mine, and the vice-royalty that thy father Hannibal hath here in Iberia is mine. It depends simply upon how sweet and loving thou provest thyself to me now whether I spare his life or not, for know this, so incensed are the council of One Hundred at Carthage, and all the people also, at his having attacked Saguntum, and so embroiled them once more with Rome, that they have sent me here, armed with a large force, to seize and execute him. thou, my pretty sweetheart, hast been decreed unto me as the reward for my trouble in coming. Therefore, if thou wilt be sweet and loving to me, then for thy sweet sake I will not only spare thy father's life, but, when we get back to Carthage together, for I could never stop long in this country of barbarians, I will make thee my wife. 'Twere therefore wise for thee to become my willing partner, and then all will go well."

Elissa's anger rose beyond all control at this insulting speech; she could play her part no longer now.

"I will never be thine," she said, "thou insolent hound! And as for thy seizing Hannibal, thou canst not do it. His troops have been marching in all the evening, and I, with my guard in the palace, can have thee arrested now this instant if I so choose."

"Hannibal's troops here so soon! By Moloch! I did not imagine that those were the troops of Hannibal that I saw marching in. There is, indeed, no time to lose. Thou shalt be mine this very night, for thou hast sought to entrap me, as

I imagined thou mightst, for all thy winning ways. But thou art a little young yet, Elissa, and, when I have had thee in training for some time, thou shalt see that thou hast much to learn from the 'insolent hound,' as thou so politely hast termed me."

"Thine to-night, faugh! Thine never! my Lord Adherbal, for know that this night thou shalt sleep in the dungeon of the castle, for I will have thee instantly seized. I have but to cry aloud. And to-morrow morning thou shalt be crucified."

"And to-morrow morning, my pretty one, my men will, storm the palace, and, unless they find me alive and well, put every inmate within it to the sword. Not much storming will, however, be necessary, for the gates will be opened for them. Therefore, cry aloud and see what happens, and to-morrow morning crucify me. But in the meantime I will hold thee as a sweet hostage here in mine arms."

As he seized her tightly, she cried aloud:

"Gisco! Idherbal! Gisco, Gisco! Cleandra, Cleandra! Idherbal!"

She screamed in vain until she was hoarse. At the same time she could hear Melania screaming loudly also, while from Cleandra, at the far end of the verandah, some faint protests could be heard.

In vain did Elissa cry aloud until she was exhausted, and meanwhile Adherbal held her and mocked her. Her plans had utterly miscarried, and he had been more clever than she. She had given her men instructions to make his guards drunk, and to be concealed and ready to come to her assistance instantly when called for. She had also ordered a reinforcement of double the usual number in the gate guard-houses. But Adherbal, as he now calmly informed her, had obtained possession both of the postern gate and of the other gate of the palace. For he had made all her men within the palace, and also the guards at the gate-houses, senseless with merely one cup apiece of drugged wine, brought from the ship for the purpose, which his attendants had orders to offer them. All, therefore, were now lying bound and helpless. As for her

women, they had been seized and bound by his men more than an hour ago. Never had there been such a miscarrying of a deeply-laid plan, for not even her manœuvre of making Hannibal's troops appear to march in had alarmed him.

The poor girl now struggled and fought with the desperation of despair. All the while she could hear Melania's cries becoming weaker and weaker; but Cleandra's voice was no longer heard. Eventually Adherbal stifled her cries with his hand. When she was utterly exhausted, he lifted her in his arms, and with brutal kisses, accompanied by sarcastic speeches, he triumphantly bore her off towards his own apartments in the palace.

As with ease he carried off the now half-fainting girl in his arms, he met some of his own guards, who, having heard the cries, came forward, staggering with drink, from the back part of the palace.

"Begone instantly, you fools!" he cried; "have ye not both wine and women enough to amuse ye? see that ye disturb me not again."

The guards shrank back abashed, and Adherbal passed on with his burden, Elissa realising in the agony of despair, with what senses she still had left, that she was utterly helpless in the ruffian's power. And then she fell into a swoon.

CHAPTER VI.

CLEANDRA'S CUNNING.

IT is not to be supposed that Imlico had been wooing Cleandra in the rough and ready fashion that Adherbal, his leader, had adopted; but he had been more successful. For he had found the pretty young Spanish maiden like the tow which needed only the smallest spark to set it on fire, and which blazed outright when touched with a flame.

For Cleandra not only came of the passionate Spanish race, but was a flirt by nature; and owing to the eight months' siege of Saguntum, which had taken all the men away, was utterly tired of being without a gallant. Moreover, it must be admitted that she was a cunning and scheming young woman; and, therefore, speedily saw in the handsome, good-natured, and jovial young noble Imlico a tool ready to her hand wherewith to execute a project that she had long had in her heart. This was nothing more nor less than to escape from New Carthage and Hannibal's household altogether. For, although Elissa loved her, and usually treated her more like a sister than a slave, yet slave she was, and her proud nature could not forget that circumstance. She well remembered that when but a little girl of twelve, Hasdrubal had stormed her father's chief city, killed her father, and took her mother and herself captive. Her mother had only survived for a year or two. Hasdrubal had then kept the girl as his slave until she was seventeen. Then, some two years before his assassination by a Celt, in revenge for some private wrong, he had given her to Hannibal, whose sister was Hasdrubal's first wife. as a companion for his daughter Elissa. Thus, although at heart personally attached to Elissa, Cleandra had no love for

the family of Hannibal, through whose relative she had suffered, especially as, notwithstanding her high birth, she was yet considered by the household as a slave. Therefore, with her object in view, she did her utmost to bewitch Imlico, whose handsome bearing she really admired.

Although the associate of Adherbal and Ariston, Imlico was not only much younger, but a man of less determinedly bad principles than they. In short, he had a good heart; while he had no objection to taking love where he could find it, and that without burdening himself with many scruples, yet he did not at all approve of the villainous scheme suggested by the others, to bend the ladies to their will by force, or by fraud, or by a combination of both. He was, however, in a minority, and kept his feelings to himself for fear of the personal danger which he knew he would run had he dared to so much as hint at them.

And now as he wandered away with Cleandra in the faint light of a young moon, across the garden where the fire-flies flitted from bush to bush, and the air was redolent of the sweet odour of the orange blossoms, he felt himself falling deeply in love with the beautiful and high-bred girl by his side, about whose unresisting waist he wound his arm. And, apart from the scheme she had at heart, Cleandra in turn felt a strong sympathy for young Imlico, which, with the drowsy langour of the scented air, grew stronger every minute. And when at length they stood upon the battlements and looked out upon the sea, she readily yielded her lips to his ardent embrace.

Cleandra was absolutely in Elissa's confidence, and knew her deeply-laid plans, and did not for a moment think that Hannibal's daughter, or the other three ladies, were in any other danger than that of their own seeking. She had, therefore, smiled inwardly when the foolish little princess had, like herself, wandered away in the earlier part of the evening, doubtless to find a shelter and indulge in a flirtation in one of the shady summer-houses in the garden. But knowing Elissa's plans, she imagined that it was Adherbal and his companions who were in danger, not only of present captivity, but of cruci-

fixion, and it did not, from any point of view, at all suit her that this handsome young noble, with whom she had so rapidly fallen in love, should be either a captive or crucified. Therefore, although she did not intend to betray Elissa, she determined to make use of her plans for her own advantage, and the opportunity for so doing was not long in coming.

Imlico had just made her an ardent declaration. He vowed by all the gods that he adored her, and urged her to fly with him to his ship on the morrow's morn.

"I will gladly fly with thee, Imlico," replied the maiden, looking with burning glances into his eyes, "if thou wilt swear by Melcareth and Moloch to reveal nothing that I tell thee, to do exactly as I direct thee, and not to quit me for a moment. Then not only will I fly with thee, but that not to-morrow's morn, but this very night."

Enraptured, the enamoured young man pledged himself by the most solemn oaths to reveal nothing, and to follow her bidding exactly.

"Then listen closely, Imlico. I will fly with thee this very night simply to save thine own life, for it is in danger should thou stay an hour later here. For all the plot upon which ye are come hither is known, and before this time to-morrow thou and thy three companions are to be crucified upon this very battlement. Dost thou see the row of crosses beyond? They have been erected this evening on purpose for ye. They were not there when we rowed back from the harbour entrance this afternoon, The guards are but waiting the order to seize ye all."

In spite of himself, Imlico started back and shuddered when he now saw, for the first time, the gruesome preparations for his own execution. But he speedily recovered himself with a laugh, and taking the plump Cleandra in his arms, kissed her heartily.

"By Astarte! thou didst give me a fright, little one, for the minute, but I thank thee for thy confidence and kindly interest in myself. And now confidence for confidence. Know this then, that Elissa and all of you women in this palace are,

indeed, in danger if you will, saving only thyself, for thee I would not harm. But we Carthaginian nobles and our followers are in no danger from thy guards, and I will even now prove it to thee. Let us advance to where yonder sentinel is pacing by the postern gateway. We will stroll by him, and, when he challenges, thou shalt reply and give the password. Then thou shalt see who is in danger."

With the girl on his arm, Imlico rapidly paced along the battlements to the sentry, who cried out:

"Halt! Let one only advance and give the countersign."

Imlico pushed his fair companion, who boldly advanced and said, "Saguntum," which was the password arranged in the palace for the night.

"Tis the wrong password," answered the sentinel, lowering his spear point towards her. "Thou canst not pass."

Imlico laughingly now advanced in turn.

"The lady hath made a mistake, oh sentry. Carthage is the password she would have given."

"Pass Carthage, and all's well," replied the guard, and so they passed in.

It was now Cleandra's turn to shudder and start. "What? have the guards been changed?" she asked, "and the countersign?"

"Ay, that have they, fair Cleandra; and further know this that ye have not now a single man fit for duty within the whole palace walls, for all thy guards are by this time drugged, senseless, or bound. Thou seest clearly now that none of Elissa's guests are in any danger, to-night at all events."

Cleandra now thought of the story about Hannibal's troops marching in, which had been merely an arranged plan, by which the same troops should appear over and over again. For it will be remembered that these troops could only be seen from the palace when descending on to the landward end of the bridge by the big gate of the city. So the troops that had been employed had marched across the bridge, then embarked in boats, followed up the city walls, crossed the lagoon, and then marching up a winding little pass that lay

between the hills, had shown themselves again. And the best of the arrangement had been that all the mercenaries in the ships had, until dark fell, also noticed these troops arriving continually as if from Saguntum, for they saw them plainly crossing the top of a hill. In her need, for she wished to frighten Imlico, Cleandra made use of this plot.

"Ay, if thus by fraud the palace is Adherbal's, then thou art safe for to-night, my good friend, Imlico. But didst thou not notice all the troops that were continually marching over the bridge while yet we were at table? They were the advance guard of a large portion of Hannibal's forces that are being sent back from Saguntum. Many more will arrive to-morrow morn. Canst thou not see, glistening in the moonlight, the tents that have been erected for them on yonder eastern hill. This palace, therefore, even if held by thy few men, will be easily recaptured, and thou and all thine will most undoubtedly be crucified. Therefore thou must fly to-night. But now let us go back to the verandah, for Elissa may have sore need of me ere I go, and I would save her if I could. It grieves me sadly to leave her, but I feel that in thee I have found the man I love, and I would save thy life, while her life, at all events, is not in danger. But without me thou wilt never pass alive the guards stationed at the harbour mouth. With me thou art safe."

Imlico was now thoroughly alert; the girl had convinced him of his great danger. It was just when they had reached the end of the verandah that Elissa had commenced to scream under Adherbal's brutal grasp, and Melania likewise in the clutch of Ariston.

Then Cleandra had begged Imlico to allow her to fly to the young girl's assistance, but he had restrained her. These were the protests that Elissa had heard.

"Let me go, let me go, Imlico! I will save her from the brute! and Melania is in danger also."

"Let thee go? Never! They are in the danger that all pretty young women run, 'tis true; but what is that to thee or me? Man is man and woman woman, and no one seeks their

lives, while shouldst thou foolishly interfere at this inopportune moment thy life will surely pay the forfeit, for both Adherbal and Ariston are brutes when their passions are aroused, and would surely slay thee. Stay here, I say, with me, for with me alone thou art safe. Thou shalt stay," and forcibly he detained her.

Thus Cleandra was the unwilling witness of Elissa's abduction, and also heard the brutal attack made by Ariston on Melania.

Ariston had drunk himself into a state of utter intoxication, and was absolutely careless of what he was doing. He saw Adherbal carrying Elissa off in his arms and strove to emulate his example. But Melania was very tall and strong and made a most vigorous resistance, which Ariston was unable to overcome. Whereupon, with brutal ferocity, he attempted to half strangle her, for he did not by any means intend to kill her. He very nearly succeeded in his foul attempt, but suddenly Cleandra, who was still being forcibly detained by Imlico, heard a groan and the sound of a fall. Tearing herself from her companion, she rushed forward and found both Ariston and Melania lying prostrate on the floor of the verandah. In the struggle that had taken place the couple had moved into the light of the lamp hanging in the doorway, and there they had fallen.

A gruesome sight it was that now met Cleandra's eyes. His throat transfixed with a small dagger, which Melania had worn that evening through her hair, Ariston was lying, not dead, but open-eyed and speechless, with a stream of blood flowing slowly from his neck. Alongside him, with raiment sadly torn and disordered, lay Melania, unconscious and deathlike, with discoloured face and frothy blood upon her lips, Cleandra screamed loudly, and would have fallen, too, had not Imlico, rushing forward, caught her swaying form in his arms.

As she fell weeping upon her knees by the side of Melania, Imlico, whom this tragedy had alarmed, begged her to be firm, as immediate action was necessary if either or both of them were to be saved, and he urged upon her the necessity of instant flight.

Although Cleandra had fully made up her mind to escape that night, she was not prepared to go without seeing Elissa again, or making some attempt, she knew not what, to save her. Suddenly she leapt to her feet and wiped her tears, as an idea sprung to her mind, and her nerve came back.

"Wait here," she said to Imlico; "thou hast sworn to obey my directions. Shouldst thou fail in thy word, count not then on me to save thy life, for it is doomed! Therefore wait for me here by the doorway. Strive to restore Melania, lift her up against the pillar, and give her air."

She sprung within, and rushed to the room where Maharbal had been left lying on his couch, senseless when she had seen him last. To her joy she found him now perfectly conscious, with eyes not only open but intelligent. Pale he looked, indeed, and weak, but he was a man—the only man who could be stirred to action in the whole place. It would not matter, so Cleandra thought, what should happen to him after, could he but prove of use to Elissa now. She took his sword and thrust it into his hands.

"Maharbal," she said, "Elissa hath just been borne off into his apartment by Adherbal, who arrived here to-day. There may yet be time to save her, but Melania hath been slain while struggling with his companion, Ariston. Canst thou move? I will show thee the room. Thou hast perchance yet strength to rise and use this weapon."

Maharbal bounded from his couch, his eyes on fire.

"Only show me the room, Cleandra, show me, quick!" He staggered as he rose from the couch, but Cleandra steadied him with her arm.

"This way," she said, and he followed her, still leaning on her shoulder, and collecting his shattered wits and strength, She proceeded direct to Adherbal's apartment, and, pausing for a second, said rapidly, "Maharbal, I am powerless to help Elissa further, and now it is for thee to do so if there be yet time. The palace and the palace gates are both in the hands

of Adherbal's people, but I am escaping with Imlico, one of his nobles, simply and solely as a means of alarming the troops on guard outside, who will come to the rescue. Meanwhile, thou must act."

She opened the door, only to see Elissa all dishevelled in the arms of Adherbal, and fainting on a couch. He was fanning her face, and apparently striving to restore her. She opened her eyes at that instant with returning consciousness. She saw and recognised Cleandra and Maharbal. A gleam of hope sprung to the wretched young girl's eyes.

"Maharbal," she cried faintly, "Maharbal! save me! avenge me!"

Maharbal sprang upon Adherbal, who, snatching up his dagger from the side of the couch, where it had fallen, turned to meet him with the angry growl of a tiger, but of a tiger who has been baulked of his prey.

In a second Maharbal struck down his foe with a terrible blow, which almost severed his right arm at the shoulder. A second later his sword was at his throat.

"No," cried Elissa, springing up, her bosom exposed, and hair wildly tossed about. "Slay him not now, think of the outrage he hath put upon me. Reserve him for crucifixion. Think what an insult he hath put upon me, who love thee; to me, Elissa, Hannibal's daughter."

"Yes, crucify the villain, Maharbal," cried Cleandra also, "and Ariston likewise, if he be alive to-morrow, which I doubt. As for Zeno, I know not what the princess hath done with him. Hold now thy sword at his throat, while I bind him with these curtain ropes, and gag him with this 'kerchief. There, that is done. Now leave him here and lock the door, and do thou, Maharbal, and thou, Elissa, stay together in Maharbal's apartment. Come thither quickly, draw in Melania, and barricade the door if ye would live throughout the night. As for me, Elissa, I must leave thee now and for ever, although my first object in flying from thee and slavery will be to send immediate relief to thee and Maharbal. This I can do by escaping with Imlico, whom I have won over to me. With him I can pass

the few sentinels that Adherbal hath placed on the walls, and I have arranged a plan in my mind, so that upon my arriving at the harbour entrance, I can send some of our men, who will obtain admission at once. For I will give them the Carthaginian password, which I know, and, on leaving, I will make Imlico tell the sentinel at the postern gate to expect some of Adherbal's troops to arrive shortly.

"Another thing I can do for thee and New Carthage through Imlico. It is this, I can carry out the plot on the lines of thy two letters to Adherbal, and so induce the fleet, partly from fear of Hannibal's army, partly by greed and hope of gain, to leave for Saguntum at once. And now farewell, Elissa. Do not think hardly of me for flying with Imlico. Think that I was the woman who, through Maharbal's right arm and with the help of the great god Melcareth, was the means of saving thine honour. Here then stay now for safety in Maharbal's apartment. I will first bid Imlico bring in to ye Melania, and then I will depart. She hath, I rejoice to say, wounded the scoundrel Ariston sorely with her dagger; yet I trust he may live for the cross to-morrow, since he thoroughly deserves it."

Cleandra now returned to Imlico, and, enjoining silence, made him bear the body of Melania, who still appeared perfectly lifeless, into Maharbal's room. Then she and Elissa fell upon each other's necks and parted with tears of sorrow.

Seizing Imlico by the arm, Cleandra passed with him swiftly to the postern gate, where her lover gave the password "Carthage," and told the sentinel to shortly expect some troops, and to admit them,

At the bottom of the staircase the crew of the State galley were sleeping. These she aroused and ordered to man the boat, as she was on pressing business of their mistress Elissa, Regent and Governor of New Carthage. And as they all knew her, they made no difficulty about complying.

Speedily and in silence did she and Imlico proceed to the south entrance to the harbour, where, on giving "Saguntum" as the watchword, she was able to land and see the officer in

command at that point. To him she confided the whole position of affairs, and after ordering him in Elissa's name instantly to proceed with a body of men to the rescue of those in the palace, and giving him the watchword "Carthage" wherewith to effect an entrance, she re-embarked in the State barge, and rowed off to the flagship with Imlico. There the arrangements that she made through her lover and the reports which she spread were such that, when dawn broke. there was considerable consternation throughout the fleet. For they learned that Adherbal was a prisoner, and likewise Zeno and Ariston, and that an enormous encampment had been raised upon the eastern hills during the night. over, in accordance with Elissa's cunning design, musical instruments and bugles were sounding, while all the small body of men available for the purpose were constantly moving up and down in front of the first row of tents in the camp.

The men on the fleet, and indeed Imlico himself, were easily convinced that a large force of Hannibal's had actually come The mercenaries, therefore, now deprived of their leader, were not at all disposed to attack the city; but, on the other hand, being fired with the accounts they had overheard the previous evening of the capture of the enormous spoil at Saguntum, news of which had spread all through the fleet, were anxious to go off and join Hannibal himself, and share in the booty of the place. When, further, an hour or two after daybreak, two of the crucifixes upon the walls of the palace, which were plainly visible from the fleet, were seen to be first lowered and then raised again, each with the body of a man attached. consternation fell upon all the mercenaries. For they knew that these human forms must be those of Adherbal and one of his attendants. As a matter of fact, they actually were Adherbal and Ariston, who were thus paying the penalty for their brutal crimes. As for Zeno of Rhodes, he was spared at the supplication of the Princess Cœcilia, and merely, with all Adherbal's men, confined as a prisoner in the dungeons. Without waiting for any orders now, every ship commenced preparations to make sail.

Cleandra had no intention whatever of going herself to Saguntum, where she would certainly have been seized by Hannibal as his runaway slave. She therefore impressed upon Imlico the great risk that he would himself run if he arrived without any letter to prove to the great commander his innocence of complicity in Adherbal's crimes, and seeing his danger, he readily listened to her advice. He disembarked all of the mercenaries on board the flagship, and sent them off in detachments to the other ships in the fleet. He then, having promised large sums of money to the ship's captain, the officers, and the crew, persuaded them to turn her head the other way. and to set all sail for Carthage. And by the time of their arrival at the port of that queen of all the cities of the seas, Cleandra had obtained such an ascendancy over her lover's somewhat weak mind, and he was, moreover, himself so infatuated with her, that, upon landing, he made her his lawful wife.

And thus, by the nerve and well-designed plans of Elissa, coupled with the cunning and cleverness of Cleandra, was the honour of Hannibal's daughter saved, and a great plot against Hannibal himself brought to nought.

CHAPTER VII.

MELANIA'S MISERY.

HANNIBAL was not long in learning at Saguntum of what had taken place in New Carthage, and was in possession, in most accurate detail, of all the facts from Elissa's own pen, before the fleet, laden with the mercenaries, arrived. She had, at the end of her letter, added that Melania's recovery, after being despaired of, was now assured.

Hannibal was particularly pleased with Maharbal's conduct, and gave orders that he was to be appointed at once to the command of the Numidian Cavalry, while the proceeds of the sale of a large portion of the spoil of Saguntum, and half-adozen splendid chargers which had been taken from the enemy, were also to be despatched to him in New Carthage. For Elissa had informed her father that, owing to his exertions, the young man's wound had broken out bleeding afresh, and that he was not able to move from the palace, nor could he for some time to come.

Hannibal would not have been the great general and leader of men that he was if he had not been remarkably astute. His intuition was so great, that he could, so to speak, see the end of a book before another man had finished reading the title-page. In all the years he warred in Iberia, Gaul, Italy, and Carthage, and in all the alliances he made with tribes once hostile to him, never was there a single conspiracy made against his life, though assassination and treachery were common; from which it must be concluded, that he could read well the characters of the men with whom he had to deal, and knew how best to deal with them.

When he read through his daughter's letter, he was with his

two younger brothers. He indulged freely in curses against Adherbal and all his crew, especially the treacherous party of Hanno, now paramount in Carthage. But when he read that Maharbal was not able to leave the palace, he burst out laughing violently.

"What art thou laughing at, Hannibal?" quoth Mago, the younger of his two brothers, and a great personal friend of Maharbal. "I see nothing to laugh at in the fact of Maharbal's being still a sufferer, owing to his having been the saviour of thy daughter and my niece's honour. It seems to have been a case of touch and go, and he, with Cleandra's aid—whose freedom, by the bye, should now be granted—undoubtedly saved her in the very nick of time. I think it is no laughing matter that a good soldier and good fellow like Maharbal should be still so dangerously ill."

"Thou young simpleton," answered Hannibal, "canst not see through it? I, at all events, know Elissa, the little minx. and that she is in love with the young giant, and perceive clearly that now she maketh him out far worse than he is on purpose to keep him nigh her. I saw the wound he had; 'twas nothing serious for a man of his physique. Had it been so, I would never have despatched him on that tremendous ride. But if we heed not, where that rascally scoundrel Adherbal failed to succeed by force, Maharbal will, although he is the very soul of honour, win in spite of himself; for in her gratitude, she will throw herself into his arms whether he will or no; if, indeed, she hath not done so already, for she hath the passionate nature of her Spanish mother. And then we may have to marry them, which I, for one, do not at all wish, for, in my opinion, Maharbal married will be a good soldier As regards Elissa herself, I should not mind, for, seeing his birth and breeding, she could scarcely do better, yet, for the sake of the country, I might perchance wed her to some king. Still, I say that I can always marry them later should it be found advisable.

"But pay attention, my brothers. I have such an enterprise in my head, which I have not yet informed you of, that I want

with me no married men with young wives left at home to think about. So I fear that I must spoil my daughter Elissa's little scheme, no matter at what stage things may be; although, since I love her very sincerely, I grieve to give her pain. But for the reasons I have mentioned they must be separated. Therefore, can either of you devise a scheme which will, without hurting either Elissa's honour or her self-respect, separate her completely, and make her throw over Maharbal of her own accord, cause her to do it, too, in such a manner that he will from his own feelings of pride wish to have no more to do with her?"

Hasdrubal, the elder brother, who was cunning, now answered with a quiet smile:

"Well, it is unkind to Maharbal certainly; but he is a good soldier, and should not be spoilt as thou sayst, and I can give thee the cue, Hannibal. But it would grieve Elissa, and since I love the girl, I think that for her own protection she would be better married. So, perhaps, I had better keep the idea to myself, and let her marry him."

"No, no," answered Hannibal determinedly. "I will have no marriage, I tell thee, Hasdrubal. What is thy plan?"

"Oh, well, it is simple enough. Thou art sending to Maharbal money, thou art sending him horses; but thou hast forgotten he is entitled to yet another share of the spoil, thou hast sent him no slaves. Now, methinks, if thou wert to send him one of the most beautiful of these beautiful young Greek girls that we have captured, Elissa's pride and jealousy would cause her to throw him over at once. I have, among my share of spoils, got so many of them that I do not know what to do with them all, I came across this morning, for the first time. a most lovely maiden of some sixteen summers, named, I think. By the goddess Tanais and all her mysteries, she is a Chloe. gem indeed, this Chloe; why not then send her to Maharbal with thy greeting, Hannibal, and the trick is done at once? The pretty child was weeping as though she had lost a lover. and Maharbal might perchance console her."

"Is that all?" answered Hannibal, with a sneer. "Oh, my

clever brother Hasdrubal, be assured that Maharbal would, after acknowledging the gift, sell her on the following morning to the highest bidder, or give her to Elissa herself to show his constancy, as he would have a right to do. No, that will not do; we must think of something better than thy Chloe."

"I have it, then," interposed Mago. "Who is there in all thy court at New Carthage so handsome and beautiful, so clever and cunning, as that tall, dark girl, Melania, daughter of Mandonius, the brother of the king of the Ilergetes, the girl who has been lately so nearly killed? We all know that she would give her very eyes for Maharbal, so why not make a present of her to him? he would soon have to love her in spite of himself—for like begets like. Nothing, moreover, would sooner create a breach between Maharbal and Elissa, than to give him a girl whom she has been accustomed to look

taken, a little jealous already."

"Stay a moment," replied the great General. "I believe, Mago, that thou hast hit the right nail on the head this time. I have had brought to me, but secretly, by the very same messenger that brought Elissa's letter, a letter from the girl herself. I threw it on one side thinking that it was merely some petition for freedom of the usual kind, but there may be something more in it. Let us see—I have it over there. As my wound incommodes me, wilt thou bring it hither, brother, and open it?"

upon as her own slave, and of whom she is, if I am not mis-

Mago opened and read it to himself before handing it to Hannibal. As he concluded he gave a low whistle.

"Indeed, oh, Hannibal, my brother, I have, while striking at random, hit the right nail on the head this time even as thou saidst. I will read the letter aloud, and thou shalt judge if this will not exactly suit thee. And, further, not only will Maharbal not be able to refuse, but I, his friend, am by no means anxious to commiserate with him, for I consider him a very lucky fellow indeed. In fact, in spite of all my Greek slaves, I quite envy him his good fortune. For I would not mind being in his shoes myself."

"Read the letter," quoth Hannibal.
Mago read as follows:—

"In the name of the Goddess Tanais, the Queen of Carthage, the Oueen of Love, the Queen of the Seas, Greeting.

"From Melania, daughter of Mandonius, brother of the King Andobales, King of Central Iberia, to Hannibal, son of Hamilcar.

"My lord Hannibal, thou wilt have heard the news, how that Elissa and I were in the hands of two ruffianly nobles from Carthage, both since duly crucified by the mercy of Moloch the great god of sacrifice, and how we both narrowly escaped grievous wrong. My lord, our salvation and the salvation of New Carthage was only due to the timely arrival of Maharbal, the son of Manissa, brother to King Syphax of Numidia. He saved Elissa and cut down her aggressor Adherbal. His watchful care over myself hath also saved me from the very jaws of death, for I was almost strangled by the ruffian Ariston of Carthage; but he hath watched me like a brother, and I am, thanks to him, restored.

"My lord Hannibal, in this thy palace Maharbal is beloved of all the women for his bravery, his devotion to thyself, and his manly strength; above all one loveth him, even Elissa. Pardon, I pray thee, the humble supplication of thy servant Melania, but methinks that it would be well, seeing her high position, if so be thy will, that thou shouldst cause them to wed shortly. Thus will they be made happy, and the report of evil tongues be stayed. Further there can, once this be accomplished, be no more heart-burnings and jealousies among the foolish women here about thy palace, which said heartburnings are apt to cause dissensions. Especially the Princess Cœcilia would be no longer able to annoy the Lady Elissa as she doth now by her folly about the young man. My lord, I love Elissa as I respect her, and it is in her interests and for the honour of thy name that I have dared to mention these things, therefore I pray thee forgive thy slave.

But lest thou shouldst imagine, oh my lord Hannibal,

that there is no due cause for this letter, then know this, that there are other and weightier reasons which impel me to write. Although thy slave, thou hast ever treated me as thy daughter's friend, and such indeed I am, the friend of thy house.

"Therefore know this, I have been lately in frequent communication with my younger sisters, the daughters of Mandonius. From them I have learned that great discontent exists against thee and thy government on the part of both my father Mandonius and his brother Andobales, king of the Ilergetes, formerly despot of all Central Iberia. One cause, but only one cause out of many for this discontent, is that I am still retained a slave, and they fancy that I am not happy in the household. My lord Hannibal, couldst thou take steps to assure them of my complete content and happiness, and shouldst thou see fit to send me with a suitable escort on a mission to the court of Andobales, it is my belief that I could easily attach both mine uncle Andobales and my father Mandonius firmly to thine own person and to the cause of Carthage. My lord, I know more than I have committed to paper, therefore I pray thee forgive the boldness in thus "MELANIA." addressing thee of thy slave

Both Hannibal and Hasdrubal his brother smiled when this letter was ended, and the former remarked:

"Ay, Mago, my lad, I see it, despite all the girl's cunning. She is indeed a clever girl, and she wants me to give her to Maharbal, and by Melcareth! she shall have her wish, for she can be useful, ay, indeed more than useful to me at the present juncture. I have sore need of the close alliance of the whole of the Ilergetes and of all the great tribes dependant upon them, for we shall not long be left alone in Iberia, since the Romans will soon be sending their legions here. And this girl can win us this alliance as she saith. But for all that I will not give her her liberty, nay, nor marry her to Maharbal, for he certainly shall not marry her if I let him not wed Elissa; further, I would keep a hold on the girl. But for the interests of the State I will, as she desireth, make her happy. I will

therefore give her to Maharbal, at all events for the time being. He shall leave the palace at New Carthage, and whether he will or no shall take her to live with him, with the understanding given to her by me that she is to be considered as his affianced wife, to be wedded and set free when I see fit. If that will not make her happy, then I am not named Hannibal. I am not, alas! so sure of Maharbal himself, nor of Elissa. But reasons of State ever are paramount, and all must bend to my will or suffer for it."

And Hannibal frowned deeply at the mere idea of being thwarted in any way.

"No one dare oppose thy will, brother," said Hasdrubal, "for thou art king here absolutely; although thou wearest not the crown thou couldst any day, an thou would, place it upon thy brow. Thy plan is a good one as I see it. For it will firstly have the effect of separating Elissa from Maharbal; secondly, it will prevent the latter from marrying at all; thirdly, thou canst send the girl Melania under the escort of Maharbal himself to the court of King Andobales, and she can point to him as her affianced husband. That will more than content these barbarians, especially when they know how highly he stands in thy favour, and that he is, leaving his high connections on one side, commander of all the Numidian Cavalry."

"It shall be done without delay," said the chief. "Call in my faithful Greek friend and scribe, Silenus; he shall write the necessary letters for us. He hath a cunning hand hath Silenus, and knoweth well how to convey an order so that it is thoroughly understood, yet seemeth but intended as a favour. But at all events, Maharbal shall not marry, and to my mind Elissa is too young to be married yet. Further, she may be useful to the State later."

These reflections he added meditatively, as if sorry for the blow that he was about to inflict upon his daughter.

Then Silenus, who was ever Hannibal's closest friend, and who accompanied him in all his wanderings, was called in, and three letters were written—to Elissa, Maharbal, and Melania respectively, all carefully worded.

In about a week the courier bearing the letters arrived at New Carthage, where they caused considerable stir and many heart-burnings.

That to Elissa, after conveying the warmest praise for her conduct, intimated the speedy arrival of Hannibal himself, and then referred to Maharbal. Of him the Commander-in-Chief said, that since he was the only officer in the whole of the Carthaginian army of those who had served before Saguntum who had no female slaves, and that Elissa herself being unmarried and Maharbal residing in the palace with her, some talk was being bandied about the camp which were best suppressed, therefore, Hannibal considered it best that Maharbal should leave the palace forthwith, and as he seemed not vet wholly recovered from his wound, that he should take Melania with him to watch him until his recovery. Further, Hannibal intimated to his daughter that, as there were reasons of State for this arrangement, he trusted to her duty, even if she should herself have formed any attachment for the young man, to offer no opposition to her father's projects. ended with instructions to send the unfortunate Zeno and the captive guards of Adherbal to perpetual slavery in the silver mines.

To Maharbal were conveyed the warmest thanks and praise of his Commander-in-Chief, an intimation of his promotion, and of the despatch to him of much gold and many horses; further, a deed of gift conveying to him a house belonging to Hannibal, situated near the citadel. He was also informed that, as a reward for his bravery and devotion, Melania was appointed to be his companion, and, although Hannibal would himself not resign his own vested rights in her, she was to be considered in all other respects as his slave. Finally, Hannibal enjoined upon Maharbal that, for reasons of his own, he expected him to do all in his power to make Melania happy in every respect; also the necessity of his impressing upon everyone that Melania was not merely his slave but his affianced bride, to be wedded when his commander should see fit.

In a kindly-worded note, in Hannibal's own hand on a

separate paper, the contents of which he was enjoined to a to himself, Maharbal was informed that he need be in no of being plunged into any immediate wedlock, for that Ha bal had no intention of having any of his superior offi married for a long time to come, not, at all events, be certain work of great importance that he had in hand she be completed.

Before the arrival of these letters, Maharbal and Elissa been living in a state of halcyon bliss, the only disturl element to cause any trouble having been the foolish little Prin Cœcilia, who, with her mania for flirtation, had been incessa casting eyes at the young Colossus, and indeed making lov him very openly. For she was dying to get married again. had conceived the idea of marrying Maharbal himself. Melania, she had suffered greatly for some days after escape, and had, during the days that Maharbal, sick him had tended her like a brother, in no wise ever allowed feelings to get the upper hand of her self-constraint, nor allo her inward devotion and passionate attachment to him appear outwardly. As Elissa had also been kindness itsel her, she had, indeed, during those days of sore sickness. solved to subdue self entirely, and to banish from her h the love she bore to the gallant officer of the Numidian Ho Thus it had been solely with the intention of striving to m her two benefactors happy, while removing temptation f herself, that she had secretly written as she had done in first part of her letter to Hannibal. The latter part spoke itself. But her self-abnegation had been utterly misunderst by the great commander and his brothers, who had quite 1 judged her, with the result that is known.

The letter that she received herself came to her as a prise. No mention was made of the letter that she had sen Hannibal, but his to her commenced by saying that expected shortly to have need of her services on an impormatter; that he regretted to hear of the danger she had be in, and that he rejoiced at her escape, and at the concennishment of her aggressor.

Then the letter continued, that Hannibal, ever mindful of the happiness of those who had done good service to the State, had not forgotten her or Maharbal, and was anxious to make them both happy. Therefore, since Maharbal had not, in the usual fashion of the army, any female slave living with him, and as he was universally well spoken of by men and women alike, he had decreed that, for the present, she was to remove herself from the palace, and to reside with Maharbal in the house which he himself was going to give him as a residence. Further, that she was not to consider that she was being treated lightly in this matter, although she was undoubtedly at present a slave, nor was she to consider herself merely in the same light as any other slave-girl who might be the temporary mistress of the home of one of the nobles in the Carthaginian army, Hannibal, bearing the greatest good-will to both Maharbal and herself, and recognising that, from her birth, she was in a position to be his wife, had decreed that, while under Maharbal's roof, Melania was to be considered and treated as his affianced bride. She was informed that the actual marriage should take place at such time, as, in the opinion of Hannibal, it conveniently might, and that, at the same time, her freedom would be conferred upon her.

The letter ended: "Thou art to show unto Maharbal this my letter unto thee, and show it further to my daughter, Elissa, Regent and Governor of New Carthage."

The terribly mixed feelings with which Melania read this letter caused her poor fluttering heart to beat as though her bosom would burst. There was no joy she longed for in life more than to become all in all to Maharbal, although, alas! she well knew that he did not love her, but only loved Elissa. Thus, despite her love, she hated the idea of being compelled to live under his roof as his wife, for this was very plainly the General's intention. Again, she knew how Maharbal himself would take the matter, and she dreaded his scorn and neglect. She also feared the anger and revenge of which she might be the sufferer at the hands of Elissa, whose ardent love for Maharbal she well knew, for she had seen it indulged in openly

and unrestrainedly by the young girl before her very eyes. For Elissa, with all the thoughtless folly of youth, had never considered her slave's presence when with the glorious young Apollo, her own sun god.

Sooth to say, there was no such man as Maharbal in all the lands of Carthagena or of Iberia. He was, indeed, a very Adonis for beauty, with all the strength of a Hercules. It was no wonder that he was beloved by maids and matrons alike, for in face, form, and disposition he was in all points a man for a woman to worship.

The wretched Melania in her despair knew not what to do. When nearly mad with thinking, she eventually sent a maiden with the letter to Maharbal and Elissa when they were together. And then, leaving a note in her apartment saving that she was departing for ever, and that it would be useless to seek her, she fled from the town; walking as one distraught, not knowing what she would do, but simply with the idea of taking away her own life in some way. For, from whatever aspect she looked at it, she could not face the situation. While passing the guard house and crossing the bridge leading to the mainland, she met many people who knew her, and who saluted her. looked at them vaguely without seeing them, and passed on. They thought from her dazed expression that she had gone mad. And so, in fact, the poor girl had in a way. Vaguely still, she wandered on until she took a little by-road that led up into an interminable cork and hazel forest, that covered the whole of the mountain-side. As she was ascending the hill, she met a man whom she had quite recently befriended, an old soldier who had had his leg broken in an accident in the palace, and whom she had nursed. He had gone to live on the mountain-side, where he made a living by capturing, with the aid of his sons, the game which abounded. He stopped her, and being a garrulous old man, forced her to speak to him. He informed her that as evening was now coming on she must not proceed further, for that she would be in danger of her life from the wolves, bears, and wild boars with which the forest was filled.

"Wolves, bears, and wild boars! are there many?" she

"The hill is full of them, dear lady Melania; therefore, to go further to-night will be certain death."

"Then, as certain death is what I seek, I shall proceed," replied the girl. "Take thou this piece of gold, and let me pass. Nay, here are two, and some silver also—take them all."

Pushing the old man aside, she passed on, and wandered away into the recesses of the forest, until, long after having left all vestige of a trail, she fell from sheer exhaustion beneath the shadow of a spreading plane-tree, beside a little spring. After drinking a draught of the cool, refreshing water, she laid herself down to await the coming of the wild animals that were to solve the vexed problem of her existence for her, and to terminate all her woes. But she remained there that night, and also for the following three days, gradually dying from starvation, and still no ferocious beast came by to terminate her ills.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE FULFILLED.

SINCE the rescue of Elissa from the brutal grasp of Adherbal. the young girl had unrestrainedly given all her love to her protector. Although experienced in matters of war, from having accompanied her father on his campaigns, she was utterly inexperienced in matters of love, and, for all her determination—indeed, almost cruelty of character—begot by the way in which she had been brought up, she was passionately loving. This was born in her, and she was, moreover, just at the very age when a maiden's heart is most impressionable. She had no idea of counting the cost of anything that she might do where her love was concerned, and she had fully made up her mind that Maharbal was to be hers, and she his. Although in those days, as now, eventual matrimony was considered a desirable object in life for young women, a lapse from virtue beforehand, when marriage was intended, was not looked upon as a heinous crime, even among the highest families of Carthage. For the worship of Tanais, or Astarte, was but another name for the worship of Venus, and, as all readers of the classics know, whether under the names of Artemis or Aphrodite, of Venus or Astarte, the worship of the goddess of love was seldom accompanied by the greatest con-This was evident by the Eleusinian mysteries in tinence. Greece, and the Veneralia in Rome, while the extreme licentiousness of the Carthaginian priestesses of Tanais at Cissa, the town whither the revolted mercenaries of Hamilcar were banished, is too well known to require comment.

From her earliest youth, Elissa had been instructed to be a worshipper of the greatest of Carthaginian divinities after Mel-

careth, this Venus, Astarte, or Tanais. And she was more than ever a faithful votary of the shrine since she herself, youthful, ardent, and loving, had set her deepest affections upon Maharbal. She expected and intended that he should become her husband; but she had, with the laxity of the times, resulting from this worship of Tanais, fully determined that, with or without the marriage tie, their lives should be joined together in a closer union than that which usually unites those who have not already become man and wife.

The only difficulty was in Maharbal himself. man who had ideas of purity far beyond his age. He did not believe at all in pre-nuptial love, and had altogether a higher standard of the moral law than any known to exist at that time. He was, indeed, laughed at in the army for never keeping even one female slave. He had, in consequence, after having come to a full understanding with Elissa, whom he loved, as she loved him, with every fibre of his soul, been extremely careful that, as far as he was concerned, she should remain absolutely pure. He intended her to be his wife, and she was, he knew, absolutely determined to marry him. There, indeed, seemed to be to neither of them the slightest reason why they should not shortly wed. Therefore, he had ever gently restrained her passionate abandonment. recognised plainly that these loving advances were made solely in the loving confidence that she reposed in the man who was to be her husband. To any other man she would, he well knew, have been as cold as ice, and he recognised that, with body and soul, she loved him, and him alone.

Thus, when Hannibal's mandates arrived, ordering Maharbal to take Melania as his mistress, the youthful and passionate Elissa became furious with rage and jealousy. She might have ooked upon the matter in a less severe light, judging by the habits of the day, had not Hannibal, her father, so distinctly said that Maharbal and Melania were to be considered as betrothed to each other; but this order, depriving her for ever of the hope of the lover who had never as yet been hers, aroused her fury to the highest degree, and Maharbal himself.

was not less angry than Elissa at being caught in this trap of Hannibal's. While discussing the matter together, the letter from Hannibal to Melania was brought to them. When Elissa had read it, for once her whole nature rose up in revolt. She became, for the first time in her life, a thorough rebel to her father's authority, and instantly determined upon the death of her rival. For was she not still the Regent and Governor of New Carthage, and was not the power of life and death in her hands?

She instantly called the palace guards, and ordered them to go to Melania's apartment, to lead her away for instant decapitation, and to return and inform her when her orders had been obeyed.

Maharbal strove to interfere; but Elissa, drawing herself up, remarked calmly:

"I am supreme here, Maharbal; this is my palace, and these are my guards. No one can give orders here but myself."

Shortly afterwards word was brought to Elissa that Melania was missing, and that a letter had been found in her room saying that she was departing for ever; therefore the order for her execution could not be carried out. She had been seen to leave the city; but whither she had gone no man knew.

Her first rage being past, Elissa was doubtless glad that her barbarous orders could not be executed, since she was not cruel at heart. As for Maharbal, he was delighted, not only that Melania's execution could not be carried out, but that her absence made it quite impossible for him to fulfil the orders of his chief. He thought it probable that the girl had fled—as indeed she had—merely from fear of Elissa's vengeance, and sincerely hoped that he might never see her face again.

Under Hannibal's delegated authority Elissa had it in her power to ratify the marriages of all persons under her rule at New Carthage; so in her disappointment, and while knowing that without Hannibal's permission it would be illegal and irregular to apply this authority to her own person, she determined upon a bold stroke, and resolved instantly to celebrate

her own marriage with Maharbal. Requesting the presence of Gisco and the princess as witnesses, she, much to their alarm and surprise, at once announced to them her intention; and when the guards, who had brought the news of Melania's absence, had withdrawn, proudly drew herself up, and advancing to where Maharbal was sitting, sadly buried in thought, laid both her hands upon his shoulders, and looked him straight in the eyes. All trace of girlishness had now vanished; it was a woman, and a determined woman, who thus confronted him.

"So Melania is not to die, it seems, for if she reappear now I shall not have her executed, but carry out my father's orders, and hand her over unto thee, or, rather, hand thee over unto her. Yea, hand over thee my affianced husband to be the affianced lover of another woman. And she, this slave, by Hannibal's cruel command, in which, methinks, he hath dealt somewhat lightly with Hannibal's daughter, hath been plainly ordered to live with thee as if thou wert in truth her husband. Hannibal says it is for State reasons: but State reasons or no. since I am not thy wife, and this girl is missing, I will do that which will make it for ever impossible for me to give myself as wife to any other man. For I, too, although only affianced to thee, will do my duty to thee as thy wife. And since what applies where this Iberian slave is concerned, applies equally where Hannibal's daughter is concerned, I, Elissa, being determined to bind my life unto thine, and to thine alone for ever, now solemnly salute thee, Maharbal, as my husband, before these two witnesses, and before Melcareth and Tanais; and if Hannibal confirm not our marriage, he can, at all events, find no fault with thee or me. But be assured that he will confirm it, for he loveth me. And if thou wilt not take me, I will die."

Seeing that if Melania reappeared, his beloved Elissa and he would be separated for ever, all Maharbal's scruples fled from him upon hearing Elissa's word, as leaves fly before the autumn wind. Thus it fell out that he also vowed eternal fidelity to her, saluting her as his wife before the two witnesses.

For the next few days Maharbal and Hannibal's daughter yielded themselves up to all the delights of mutual love; for as they considered themselves actually married before the gods. Elissa became his wife in all but law. Maharbal, however, being the soul of honour, had stipulated before he yielded, that they should instantly confess the situation to Hannibal, and ask him to confirm their union without delay. To this Elissa readily agreed, for she knew her father's immense love for herself, and believed that, as the unexpected absence of Melania had made compliance with his instructions quite impossible, he would not be so very angry at what had Moreover, she quite expected that, knowing that she and her lover had overstepped the boundary of prudence. he would yield to their wishes at once, and make them, by his sanction, man and wife; or, rather, confirm the marriage which, she considered, they had consummated.

But for all that she knew him so well, and that she and her father loved each other so dearly, she yet did not thoroughly know Hannibal the Great, nor the inflexibility of his will. He arrived at New Carthage on the morning of the fourth day after these events with a large army, and still Melania had not reappeared.

No time was lost by Maharbal and Elissa in disclosing to him the actual truth. He was vexed on finding Melania missing, but found no fault with what they had done. He merely remarked drily, and with a sarcastic smile:

"I have given certain orders, my child Elissa, and they will have to be obeyed if possible, for I go not back upon my word. Neither thou nor Maharbal have hitherto been to blame, since ye could not carry them out. And as thou wast the Regent and Governor here, Maharbal was, of course, in the meantime, bound to obey thine orders. Apparently thou hast given him instructions that he was not very loth to obey. But if thou, as the result of thy futile presumption in thinking I would make ye twain man and wife, shouldst bear to him a child, think not that I will any the more for that unite thee to him in matritony. Far from it! I have said that Maharbal and Melania

are affianced to one another, and, until I know of the girl's death, affianced they remain. Mind I do not say married, but affianced; and that he cannot be affianced to two women at once, or wedded to one and affianced to another, is evident."

Neither the prayers of Maharbal nor his reference to his former services, nor the tears and supplications of Elissa herself, would for a moment shake Hannibal's will. He was not to be moved, for he was iron.

"Nay, Elissa, notwithstanding that thou hast in mine absence chosen to take the law into thine own hands, and to consider thyself the wife of Maharbal, yet, despite the oaths which thou hast sworn before two witnesses and the gods, thou art not and canst not be his wife without my consent, and that consent is withheld. Thou couldst indeed, it is true, in thy position as Regent and Governor of New Carthage, have given thine own consent, and it would have been legal, to the marriage of any others who might have bound themselves as ye have done by mutual oaths. But for thine own marriage thou wast answerable to me alone, and I will not confirm it. So that is an end of the matter. But now let us go to our mid-day meal; this subject will keep till later. I presume that thou hast made inquiries for Melania in any case?"

The shock of this blow had nearly rendered the wretched Elissa speechless. She could merely murmur:

"Ay, my father, I have sent in all directions."

"That will do then; so now let us to our repast."

Before the end of the meal, the old ex-soldier and now forester, who had met Melania on the hill, appeared, asking to see the lady Elissa. She shuddered when she heard of his presence with a foreboding of woe, for what could bring him but news of Melania? He brought, indeed, tidings that his sons, while hunting a wild boar, had come upon Melania lying unconscious in the forest, and that she was now reposing at his hut, and seemed nearly dead from starvation.

"That will do," said Hannibal, giving the man a large sum of money. "Take the lady out all necessary provisions and

wine, and bring her in when she is completely recovered; but see that she is completely recovered first."

When the old man had gone, Hannibal addressed his daughter and Maharbal.

"Until Melania reappears, my children, since matters have gone so far between ye, I will not interfere in your illegal and ill-judged union. But when she arrives, remember this, thou Elissa, and thou Maharbal, that Melania and Maharbal are betrothed to each other, and Elissa and Maharbal are thenceforth to be but the merest acquaintances, nothing more.

"Now, let us be merry together, and let the wine-cup go round, for we cannot always be thinking of matters of policy or of State, and save only for them, I vow I would readily ever see ye twain together as ye are now. For, by Adonis, god of beauty, ye are a splendid couple. But duty is duty, alas!

"Meanwhile," he resumed, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, "let us now raise a brimming goblet to Tanais the dear sweet goddess of love herself. What sayest thou, my pretty widow Cœcilia—they say that Tanais hath no more devoted votary than thee—wilt thou not drain a cup with us?"

Not only the flirting little princess, but everyone present, including Hannibal himself, who was no anchorite, drained their wine-cups to the dregs, Maharbal and Elissa looking deep down into each other's eyes as they drank. And the afternoon and night were passed in happiness, music, and song, and all was gaiety and rejoicing, both in the palace and camp, at the return of Hannibal from Saguntum.

CHAPTER IX.

A LAUGH AND A LIFE.

ALL was now animation in Saguntum. The winter had passed and the place was full of troops, for Hannibal was now using the city as his base of operations against all the Iberian tribes living across the Iber or Ebro.

Elissa and Maharbal had been long since ruthlessly torn apart, the latter swearing to his dear lover, for it was impossible to consider her as his wife, that Melania should be as a sister to him and nothing more. But Hannibal, careless of anybody's feelings, even his own, so that the business of the State was advanced, had soon perceived that the occasional meetings which took place between his daughter and her lover Maharbal were disturbing to them both, and thus upsetting to his calculations. He, therefore, took an opportunity one day when Maharbal was busy exercising the large body of Numidian Cavalry now under his command, of paying an unexpected visit to the house that he had given to the young warrior.

Entering quietly, he found the beautiful young Iberian girl sitting in the most forlorn position, weeping violently. Very few questions won from the reluctant damsel the position of affairs, and the anger of the great Chief was aroused. For Maharbal, faithful to Elissa, and being but her's alone, was not obeying his General's commands to make Melania perfectly happy, since it was not the love of a brother, which was all that Maharbal had given her, that would fill her yearning heart. There had been a short and sharp interview between the Chief and his Commander of Numidians, and a few days later, it being now early in the autumn, Maharbal and Melania had been sent away, with a large force as escort, to travel by easy stages on an embassy to her uncle Andobales, King of

the Ilergetes. And from the time that they had left New Carthage the face of the young maiden had brightened.

The description of the Court of Andobales, where Melania and Maharbal remained all the winter and early spring, is not here necessary, but the result of the embassy is a matter of Moved by the representations of Melania, by the history. munificent presents of Hannibal, and the fact that Melania was the affianced bride of one of the most powerful chiefs of the Carthaginian army, the closest compact of friendship was entered into between both Andobales and his brother Mandonius with the Carthaginians, which treaty of friendship was of the greatest advantage to Hannibal at that time, and faithfully respected by the Iberians so long as they were treated with proper consideration. Before, however, the treaty was absolutely ratified, the General Hasdrubal was sent by Hannibal on a further mission to Andobales to see the exact position of affairs. On his return, the report that he gave to his brother the great Commander was most satisfactory. But the information that he carried to his niece Elissa, which was purposely coloured and false, tore the poor girl's heart with frantic jealousy, for it left not the slightest room for doubt as to the state of the relations now existing between the man whom she insisted, in spite of her father's absolute disavowal of any marriage, was her husband, and the daughter of Mandonius. For Hasdrubal brought back the news that Melania was making Maharbal as happy as possible, and further that she was likely to become a mother. hearing this intelligence, Elissa was both enraged and jealous to frenzy; moreover, she suffered the more bitterly in her spirit from the fact that no such good fortune, for so she would have indeed considered it, had fallen to herself. She felt it all the more, since, moved by her unhappy looks and frequent tears, and perhaps by the fact that the treaty of friendship he desired was now established with the tribes of the Ilergetes, Hannibal had one day told her that, had there been any such an eventuality where she herself was concerned, he would have thrown over his tool Melania, and, notwithstanding his previous

refusal, have ratified his own daughter's irregular connection with Maharbal simply in order to legitimatise her offspring. But this opportunity of gaining her heart's desire was for poor Elissa lost, and possibly her astute father would never have told her, at this time, what he would have done, had he not already known that there would not be any chance of his having to keep his word.

Elissa's love of Maharbal was now turned, or she imagined that it was turned, to hatred, for, misled by Hasdrubal, she had no doubt of his infidelity, and did not in the least take into account the fact that that infidelity had been imposed upon him by her father's commands. She, womanlike, only imagined that he had broken his vow of fidelity to herself. And this thing she could not forgive!

Meanwhile, the King of the Ilergetes wrote to Hannibal requesting permission to have the nuptials of his niece and Maharbal celebrated, and to have the freedom which had been promised to Melania confirmed. Hannibal, with all the trickiness of the policy of those days, wrote in return that the marriage should be celebrated in Saguntum, and directed that the Numidian chief and his affianced wife should return for the purpose without delay to that city. He had not at heart the slightest intention of fulfilling either promise, but proposed to keep the girl really, although not nominally, as a hostage for the good behaviour of her relations. Thus State reasons influenced him again to the sacrifice of the personal feelings of the sweet-natured Melania, whom it had suited his purpose to make a plaything of in every way.

Fortunately for the great Commander's reputation for good faith, and for the feelings of Melania herself, she was spared the indignity of the wrongs that would undoubtedly have been put upon her had she reached Saguntum alive. For death came suddenly and unexpectedly to take her away at a time when she could die happily in the arms of the man whom she loved. An accident that occurred to her by the fall of her mule over a precipice in crossing the mountains caused her sudden and early death. Maharbal had scarcely reached her where she lay

crushed and mangled at the foot of a dark ravine, when she became unconscious, and passed peacefully away. And she was buried on the side of the mountain where she died.

Thus did Melania, who had never harmed a living soul, escape, by the will of Providence, from a world in which, had she lived longer, she would have undoubtedly only experienced many and bitter trials, of which the enmity of her former friend, Elissa, would have been by no means the least.

But her removal from Elissa's path by no means lessened the feeling of resentment that burned in the bosom of Hannibal's daughter against her ex-lover, Maharbal.

He, poor fellow, did not deserve the resentment, for he adored her still, as he had ever done. He had certainly, while obeying his Chief's orders, learnt to appreciate Melania's devotion to himself, especially as he had always had an affection for her, in which, however, passion had had no part.

Maharbal had been only three days in Saguntum, when going out to review the large body of Iberian and Numidian Cavalry, mounted upon his war horse, which, on account of his own great size, was an enormous animal, he was proceeding down the main street of the city. He was a magnificent sight, reminding the spectator of Apollo, the sun god, as, with a golden helmet, and wearing the most magnificent armour, he, on his mighty black charger, preceded his brilliant staff of officers. Suddenly he espied Elissa, the woman who had been as a wife to him, and who should, but for the great Hannibal's invincible will, have been actually his wife, coming down the street in the opposite direction. She was on foot, and followed by several maidens, accompanied also by a couple of young gallants about the court, who were highly honoured at being seen in her company by so many noble officers. Raising his hand, Maharbal halted the officers behind him. Dismounting, he courteously saluted the woman whom he had saved from Adherbal, and who had been, and still was, everything to

"And how doth the Lady Elissa?" he demanded, his eyes aglow with the delight he felt on seeing her. "By all the gods

of Carthage she hath a right royal mien, and it doth the heart of Maharbal good to see her once more."

Elissa deliberately turned her back upon him. Addressing one of the young men of her escort, she remarked in a voice which was intentionally raised so that all present could hear it:

"What a number of these stranger officers of the mercenaries there are in the town just now. But surely someone should give them a lesson in manners; they should be taught that ladies of rank are not to be addressed in the streets by uncouth barbarians whom they do not know."

Then, with a little bitter laugh, she sauntered on without once glancing at Maharbal. A loud titter was heard from all the maidens, following their mistress's example; from the two young nobles also, and, worst of all, from the officers of Maharbal's own staff.

But one of the latter not merely tittered, but laughed outright. He was a certain Idherbal, a right valiant officer, who had considered himself much slighted when Maharbal had been appointed over his head to the command of the Numidians. And there was not a man or woman there but knew well what was, doubtless, considered the diverting history of the loves of Elissa and Maharbal. Therefore, they considered a laugh at the unexpected insult and rebuff given by Elissa to her lover quite excusable.

Not so Maharbal. Bounding upon his war-horse, his face all aflame, the young man drew his sword.

"Defend thyself, oh, Idherbal," he cried, "for 'tis the first and last time thou shalt ever laugh at Maharbal!"

The other drew his sword rapidly, and, waiting until he did so, Maharbal charged him. Idherbal struck a mighty blow as he approached, but Maharbal, bending to his horse's neck, and, with all the skill of the famed Numidian riders, throwing his whole body on the further side of his steed, the sword met no resistance, but only whistled through the air. Back in his saddle in an instant, Maharbal, still crouched low, lunged home with the point of his weapon at the joint in the armour

beneath his antagonist's arm. The blow told; but, even as the red blood spurted out, the young giant withdrew his sword, and, with a second blow—a terrible, sweeping cut—caught Idherbal just below the helmet at the neck. The wretched man's head, helmet and all, flew spinning off into the middle of the street, while his body fell on the other side.

"Here, sirrah!" cried Maharbal to the young noble who had been addressed by Elissa, who, with all her companions, had been forced to turn and watch the rapid and bloody conflict, "come hither instantly."

Tremblingly the young man approached Maharbal, and terrified he viewed his bloody sword. For he also had been a laugher, and feared his own instant death.

"Take up that head," he commanded, in a loud voice. "It is the head of Idherbal, the son of Mago."

The young man submissively picked up the bloody head, bleeding in its casque, of the man who had been living and laughing like himself but a minute previously.

"Present the head to the Lady Elissa," he said, "and ask her whether or no it be the head of one of the stranger officers of the mercenaries who hath dared to insult her by laughing at her words without first having with her a proper acquaintance. Inform her that there are plenty more useless heads about—thine own, for instance. Go!" he thundered, "and that instantly," as the young man hesitated, "or I will depute someone else to carry both Idherbal's head and thine own to the Lady Elissa."

This was quite enough for the young noble. So terrible was the look in Maharbal's eye that the face of everyone present, as well as his own, was blanched with fear. He rushed to Elissa and deposited the terrible emblem of the sanguinary conflict at her feet.

Maharbal rode to where she stood. With his bloody glaive he pointed first to the head at her feet, then to the trunk from which the blood was still oozing, forming a large crimson pool on the highway.

"See what thy laugh hath cost, Elissa," quoth he. "Thou

hast caused the death of a brave man, who was full of health and vigour, full of hope and happiness, only two minutes ago. That life which hath now gone to Eternity might just as well have been mine own. Thou little fool! I loved thee before, but now I hate thee for having been the cause of my shedding innocent blood. Get thee gone home; never let me see thy fair face again, since I have killed a man simply for its contemptuous smile! Art thou satisfied with thy work? Begone, Elissa, I say, begone, Hannibal's daughter, or I will slay thee, too, for all that thou hast been to me, even as my wife! For thou art a dangerous woman. Begone, I say!"

Again Maharbal thundered these last words in such a terrible tone that everyone in the street trembled before him. He was well known for his bravery in battle: but no one had ever seen him in the fiercest conflict aroused like this. his followers tried vainly each to get behind his fellow, so terrified of his fearful anger was each and every one. Elissa herself, she at that moment once more loved Maharbal quite as much as she feared him, and loved him all the more because she did so fear him. Trembling, she fell upon her knees in the street before him, towering there on his war-horse. and looking the very picture of vengeance. Everyone else, from the great and sudden fear of the commander, who had showed so well his power to prove his strength, and right to command by force of arms, and from respect for the great Hannibal's daughter, had now fallen back and out of earshot, so her words were heard by him alone.

"My lord Maharbal," she said, with hands uplifted, "forgive me; I am but a woman, and I have dearly loved thee. I have given myself to thee, and proved my love. I have since foolishly hated thee; and by mine infamous conduct to-day, which hath, alas! been the cause of unhappy Idherbal's death, I have proved my hate; and, indeed, I am much to blame, and grieve sorely for what hath happened. My lord! all thy suite can see me humbly kneeling to thee here, and Hannibal will hear of it as well, but ere I rise I ask thee for thy forgiveness, for thou art before heaven mine own lord, mine

only love. And all the vows I made to thee shall last until my dying day; unless, that is," she added reflectively, "some great need of our mutual country should ever compel me to sacrifice myself in the country's cause. But know this, I love thee—I love thee, my lord and husband Maharbal."

Maharbal sprang from his horse, and flung his bloody weapon into the street. He seized her in his mighty arms, lifting her bodily from the ground, and kissed her on the lips and on both cheeks. Picking up his sword, he then addressed the officers of his suite.

"Whoever there may be among ye who would smile at his commander let him now smile. And I will meet him here on foot in mortal combat before the Lady Elissa, who is my wife."

But none smiled!

Hannibal was extremely displeased when he heard of the occurrence, for he could not afford to have his best officers killing each other on the eve of a campaign, simply owing to his daughter's foolish behaviour. Therefore he instantly sent Elissa back to New Carthage without allowing her to see Maharbal again, and they were not to meet for years.

END OF PART II.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

SOSILUS AND CHŒRAS.

HANNIBAL was resting in his house in Saguntum a few days after having sent Elissa back to New Carthage. prior to the scene depicted in the last chapter, overrun a portion of the country north of the Ebro, and Hasdrubal, his brother, was still engaged in prosecuting the campaign against all the Spanish tribes of Northern Iberia, to whom the Romans. wishing to have a hold of Spain, had promised protection. Hannibal was presiding over his wine at an informal gathering of some of his friends and officers, he was a noble figure of a Not very tall, he was, having very broad shoulders, nevertheless, of extremely athletic bearing, being built in a His chest was large, his biceps wiry and sinewy mould. largely developed, his wrists small, but like iron. His legs were one knotted mass of muscle without any superfluous His colouring was fair, indeed ruddy; his eyes were blue and piercing; his hair was a dark shade of brown. mouth, though firm, was rather large and humorous, his forehead high and commanding. Being clean shaved, his determined chin was remarkable. He looked, as he sat there, what he actually was—one of the very strongest men in the whole army. There was not, then, when he was still a comparatively young man, his equal for boxing, wrestling, or running long distances, in the whole of the Carthaginian forces, with the sole exception of Maharbal. He was the fairest man in the whole of the assembly, having inherited the colouring off his mother, who had come from a Gallic stock.

There were present with him at his table several people whose names are well known in history. Silenus, his constant companion, was of course there, also Chœras, who was a comic individual, good-tempered—a sort of buffoon, in fact, when it suited him to be amusing. Choeras was, however, an excellent versifier, and by no means a fool. Next to him sat Sosilus of Ilium, a pedant who bored everybody by his reference to learned books which nobody else cared anything about. There was also present a very different character. Hannibal Monomachus, who cared for nothing but warfare, and who delighted in slaving. He was, at present, head of the pioneers of the army. His skill was undeniable: but the methods that be employed at times were as rough and ready as the pickaxes of his own pioneers. In fact, he never minded how cruel he was when he considered cruelty necessary. He had had a considerable amount of training as a cavalry officer, and much preferred being on a war-horse at the head of his men, leading a furious charge into the midst of a body of the enemy, to building bridges and making roads. But Hannibal had somehow found out, with his singular capacity for judging men, that Monomachus had great engineering skill, and had, therefore. transferred him, for the time being, much to his disgust, from the more strictly combatant to the scientific branch of the He was now, therefore, what might be considered the general of engineers or sappers and miners.

The other soldiers present were Mago, the younger brother of the chief, and a high-spirited, brave young fellow; Hanno, a general of much experience; and last, but not least, at any rate in size, the Numidian commander Maharbal, who was the youngest man present.

Hannibal was in high good humour; news had come in that day of continued successes on the part of Hasdrubal in the provinces north of the Ebro, which he was over-running right up to the Pyrenees.

"Hast thou heard the news, Hanno?" quoth he. "Hasdrubal hath taken town after town. His last success seems to have been, after a brilliant cavalry action, in front of a city which he

calls Appollonia. I only know of two Appollonias, the one in Illyria and the other in Assyria; I know not of this one."

"I know it and to my cost, Hannibal," replied General Hanno, "and so doth our friend Monomachus. When thou wast still quite young, and we pretty young too ourselves, thy father Hamilcar, upon whose spirit rest the blessing of the gods, took us both with him with a small flying column, thinking to take the place by a sudden surprise. Surprise there indeed was, but it was all the other way. The barbarians were waiting for us in a pass in the mountains, and it was but those of us who had the fleetest horses that escaped. The worst of it was, that Monomachus here had promised us an easy entrance to the place, owing to the treachery of a young Iberian woman of whom he had, so he thought, made a conquest. He mounted her on a horse with his cavalry of the advance guard, and a nice trap she led him into, for she took him right through the pass before the enemy, who closed behind him, and attacked us. How didst thou escape, Monomachus, by the bye? Thou wert the sole member of the advance guard who ever returned, that I well remember. But we did not see thee for days."

"Escape!" growled out Hannibal Monomachus, "easily enough, though I nearly died of starvation first. The instant I saw the treachery I seized the accursed girl, and, under a pretence of saving her life, placed her on my steed, and rode off with her into a wood. There, after first stripping her of all her clothing, for fear that the raiment should be besoiled with blood, I cut her throat, but slowly only, letting her life's blood fall drop by drop. I tied her to a tree, and watched her die in fact, while expounding unto her all the maxims of virtue, the point of which was that she would have done better to run straight in every sense of the word. When at length she was quite dead, I attired myself in her raiment, and being then a beardless boy, escaped under the guise of a woman, after many wanderings. A curse I say upon that place Appollonia! hope to all the gods that Hasdrubal hath not left either man nor woman living there, especially the women."

"Most excellent Monomachus," here cut in Sosilus of Ilium. "I have listened with great interest to this thy not altogether unprecedented description of the pitfalls into which man may sometimes fall through the snare of woman. But I can cite thee a somewhat similar instance. I have no doubt but that all our distinguished company here present under Hannibal's roof will have read a certain treatise entitled 'Woman and her Wiles,' written by one Onesimus of Syracuse. It was the only thing that he ever wrote, for he was strangled by Hiero for writing it, since it concerned that monarch's mistress. Melissa by name. But the treatise was so carefully designed, so prettily elaborated, and so excellently carried through, that it seemeth to me, although 'twas slightly scandalous indeed, that had Hiero been but a man of humour, he would, instead of strangling Onesimus, rather have promoted him to the post of chief librarian. The treatise was divided into three parts. 'Woman as an attraction for man,' was the first part; 'Woman as a pitfall for man,' was the second part: 'Woman as the accursed and faithless traitress of man,' was the third part. Now, the first part commenced by a very erudite discussion upon the animal passions, and very lengthy but still not uninstructive arguments as to whether woman most attracteth man or man most attracteth woman. I remember well a remark on this subject that was most pertinently quoted. It was of the Greek writer Eulikmartes, and to the effect that-"

"Monomachus was a fool," here cut in Chœras, with a loud guffaw, and all the rest of the company, who were tittering at the meanderings of the erudite Sosilus, were pleased at the interruption.

"Yes, just so, Chœras," remarked Hannibal. "I know, at all events, that had I been in his shoes, and while being led through the nose by a woman—which, alas! hath sometimes been my case—myself led in turn my followers into a trap, I should have considered that I, too, had been a fool. But he was young—like Maharbal here is now."

"Ay, my lord Hannibal," answered Chæras, "Maharbal is

no exception; he is ever over-confiding in loving also. But here is a verse which I think applies to the case quite as well as the long-winded reflections of Sosilus:

"Nought of girls knew Monomachus.

Nought from female wiles can shake us.

One who thousand lives hath ta'en

Ofttimes is through woman slain."

A round of applause greeted this spontaneous outburst of Chœras, and the pedant was snuffed out.

"Maharbal," quoth Hannibal, when the merriment had died down and the wine cups had been replenished, "doth this not indeed a little remind thee of thine own case? Mightest not thou thyself have been slain, and only last week, solely for the bright eyes of a woman—ay, even mine own daughter, Elissa? But, instead of falling, thou hast deprived me for ever of the services of one of my most excellent officers, poor Idherbal: I pray thee earnestly not to do so again."

Maharbal sat silent under the well-merited reproach.

"My lord Hannibal," quoth Sosilus, "this remark of thine remindeth me exactly of a verse I once read when I was but a boy; it was written by an author who lived at Tyre, and was named Pygmalion, after the king, who was the brother of Dido. He was a writer who possessed a great amount of erudition, and had considered several cases much resembling that of Maharbal here, who, somewhat too rashly, albeit to preserve his own honour, in the most chivalrous way slew Idherbal the other day in the street. Now to get back to Pygmalion. He said—yet I must remember in which of his books it was; I think in the thirteenth stanza of his nineteenth volume."

"Oh, confound his books!" said Chœras, again rudely interrupting the learned man. "I will tell thee what he said, oh, Sosilus. Was it not something like this?—

"Maharbal was in a sense
Bound to seek some recompense.
He was mocked at, and the crowd
Echoed out the laugh aloud.

Thus the warrior lit and drew Forth his blade—the scoffer slew. Once more woman by her wiles Sent a soul to Heaven's smiles."

"Bravo, Chœras!" shouted out Mago, thumping on the table. "Thou art the boy for me, and if my lord and brother Hannibal will allow me, I will take thee with me, when first he deigns to give me a separate command somewhere or other. For by the gods, I like thy pithy verses—

" Once more woman by her wiles Sent a man to Heaven's smiles."

But come, Maharbal, my lad, why sittest thou so glum thy self, while thou and Monomachus are giving us such a pleasan and instructive subject of conversation? Cheer up, lad, an ioin me in a cup of wine. What hast been thinking abous while looking as melancholy as a dog about to be led out to execution? There are plenty more bright eyes besides those o my pretty niece Elissa in the world, and thou and I shall in our leisure moments oft pursue them together, that I'll warrant thee. Or is it the excellent but unfortunate deceased young woman Melania of whom thou art thinking? Ah! there was a girl for thee if thou wilt, who would never have betrayed a man-nay, nor even a woman either. Thou shouldst give me thanks for having first put it into Hannibal's head to give her unto thee; for by Melcareth, I saw her value from the first. and would gladly have had her as a companion myself. was a noble disposition."

"What I am thinking about is this, oh Mago!" responded Maharbal, "that while echoing the praise that thou hast paid to poor Melania's memory, which is well deserved, it seemeth to me that the conversation hath, with all due deference to Hannibal, been concerned quite long enough either with women or myself, and that now it would be far better if we could get back to some subject that is important at the moment, such as the news of the Iberian war, or the attitude of the Romans

now that they know not only that we have taken Saguntum, but further, in direct defiance of the treaty the late Hasdrubal made with them, that we have crossed the Iber, and are hunting their allies about like foxes to their dens in the mountains."

"Well spoken, Maharbal, my lad!" quoth Hannibal; "I will join thee and Mago in that cup of wine—'tis some that the rascal Adherbal brought to New Carthage, and most excellent. And, here is my hand upon it, this is the last that thou shalt ever hear from me of that little matter of the slaying of Idherbal the other day. For thou art, indeed, a warrior after my own heart, and I honestly agree with Chœras that as a soldier under the circumstances

" 'Maharbal was in a sense Bound to seek some recompense.'

And thou didst seek it, and gained it also very effectively all round that day, if what I heard is true. But now, there is the hand of Hannibal, the matter is closed. And as to Elissa herself, we will see later, after the war, for I am just about to disclose to thee my plans, after hearing which thou wilt wish no marriage now."

The two warriors stood up, and, both equally fearless and determined men, looked each other straight in the eyes, while Maharbal held, in a grip of iron in his gigantic hand, the far smaller but equally strong hand of his commander, which returned the grasp with equal strength.

With his disengaged hand Maharbal lifted the golden wine

"I pledge thee, Hannibal, my commander, and, by the gods, wish thee success in all thy plans and undertakings. May I, Maharbal, ever be with thee! Ay, to the death, if need be. As for thy daughter, if there be manly work before me, then, let that matter stand over, for I seek not marriage before a war—I wish not to leave a widow."

Raising his cup also to his lips, Hannibal replied:

"I pledge thee, my noble friend and servant, Maharbal, the son of Manissa; good work hast thou done already, despite thy youth, and doughty deeds shalt thou do again, for soon will come the opportunity, and, if thou wilt, thou shalt indeed be with me, ay, and I with thee, to the death in our country's cause."

Silence fell upon all present as these two noble soldiers of Carthage drained their wine-cups over this sacred compact, for such it was, of eternal fidelity on Maharbal's part, and of eternal protection and fatherly love on the part of the great commander.

And it was a compact that was never broken.

"Now," said Hannibal, when they had resumed their seats, "I have much tidings to impart unto ye all, and as it is of serious moment, I shall have to ask the learned Sosilus to spare us all learned dissertations upon similar cases which may occur to his mind."

Here there was a laugh at the learned man's expense, in which the worthy pedant, who knew full well his own failing, joined. But he could not resist an answer.

"It seemeth to me, most noble Hannibal, that thou art fully justified in asking for no further reference to learned books, when thou art in the very act thyself of making history for future generations. There is a similar instance in history when Alexander the Great was sitting at his council table previous to crossing over into Egypt. I got the anecdote from a very valuable little book written by one, Euxon, an Athenian. One of his councillors, thus saith the worthy Euxon, was, with many references to books, drawing parallel cases, and suggesting certain methods laid down as having been followed by other conquerors before him, when the great king, Alexander, rising in a stately manner, remarked—"

"Hold thy peace!" said Chœras, "even as Hannibal is about to remark now, which is a parallel case, an thou wilt."

The pedant subsided, crushed once more. Hannibal joined the others in the laugh, but said:

"And thou also, Chœras, wilt have to keep thy witty tongue in thy head as well. And now to business."

CHAPTER II.

A GIGANTIC SCHEME.

"I HAVE various news," said Hannibal; "and, first of all, I must inform ve that I have letters from Carthage. The receipt Of the enormous booty which I sent thither hath moved all the Popular party in my favour. The death of Adherbal and Ariston by crucifixion at New Carthage, after their infamous attempt at treachery to the real welfare of their country and upon my daughter's honour, hath thrown all their adherents Into dismay. They have not, therefore, been listened to at all in the Senate; and recently, when Quintus Fabius Maximus. the head of the Roman envoys, asked for my head-which, in spite of the vain boastings of Adherbal, is still safe and sound upon my shoulders-it was wisely denied him. Further, the said Fabius appears to have boastfully held up his toga saying, 'The head of Hannibal and peace, or else keep ye your Hannibal and take war. I hold the fate of Carthage for peace or war in the folds of this toga.' The Hundred were, it seems, frightened at his threats, but calmly replied, 'Give us what ye 'War be it, then!' declared the said Fabius, and he hath departed now with all his suite for Rome."

"Then we are in for war with the Romans," remarked Maharbal gleefully. "By the gods, I am right glad; so now I know the meaning of thy recent words, Hannibal."

"And I, too, am glad," quoth General Hanno.

"I, likewise," said Monomachus, "am overjoyed, most noble Hannibal, that the time for revenge hath come. May it be a long war and a bloody one! I am longing to plunge my arms up to the armpits in Roman blood. I suppose we may now soon have to expect their legions over here in Iberia? Well,

we have, at any rate, the fleet and command of the sea, thus it will be more of a sea war than a land war, I reckon. But we shall have plenty of fighting here on land also."

"My generals," quoth Hannibal, "I am glad to see in yethis spirit, which, indeed, I expected upon learning these mosmomentous tidings. But learn this, that so far as all of us here at present assembled are concerned, the war with the Romanwill be neither a sea war nor a war to be waged in Spain. will be a war in Italy itself, for I intend to attack the prouse Romans in their own country, without waiting to give them a popportunity of looking us up here. And know this, further, have for long secretly been making preparations for the investion of Italia."

A silence fell upon those assembled. At length spak-Hanno:

"Italia! the war to be in Italia! Then thou wilt, indeed attack Rome on Roman soil—a most momentous determination. And where wilt thou disembark thy forces, most noblementable. In one of the northern Etruscan ports? or wilthou rather land somewhat further to the north, in the country of the Cis-Alpine Gauls. Thus couldst thou form thy base operations in a country hostile to Rome; for all the Gauls have been terribly punished by the Romans in this recent war, and they would readily become thine allies."

"Thou hast a most strategical mind, Hanno," replied the Commander; "but learn this, that for the very reason that thou hast suggested, namely, the hope of an alliance with the Gauls, I shall not go by sea at all, but by land. I shall, therefore, cross the Ebro, march through the country Hasdrubal is now subduing, then cross the Pyrenees, and marching along the coast all through Gallia, pass the river Rhodanus. Thence I shall make the transit of the Alps, and descend into the peninsula of Italia from its north-western corner. This will bring us right into the middle of the country of all the Cis-Alpine Gauls, with whose various nations I have, unknown to Rome, been concluding alliances for the past nine months or more."

"An attack by land on Rome, marching from Saguntum in

Spain! A mighty undertaking, indeed, oh Hannibal!" here interrupted Monomachus: "and one that, shouldst thou carry it out successfully, will make the world ring with thy fame for years, ay, for centuries to come. But hast thou thought it well out, and how serious an undertaking it is from the engineering difficulties? My department of the army will have to be largely strengthened in men and material. For, think it out! thousands of miles will have to be marched: two large mountain ranges, or including the Apennines, three, will have to be crossed; and how many rivers, I should like to know? including that mighty and rapid river, the Rhone, which thou hast mentioned. The Gauls, in that part of Gallia round its mouth at Massilia, have ever been the allies of Rome, and they will offer determined opposition, be assured of that, to our passage."

"Ay, Monomachus, thine observations are all just, and I have thought of these things and thou wilt have thine hands full indeed, but there is a more serious question still that I would solve, and that is the question of food for the army. Canst thou help me to solve that, for I fear that provisions will be but scarce?"

"That is a simple matter enough," replied the blood-thirsty warrior. "We can feed the army on the Gauls themselves, whose country we shall have to pass through. They will soon get accustomed to human flesh after a little training. I would indeed suggest that they commence to be taught at once. Thou mightest send word to Hasdrubal to send us in a large batch of prisoners for the purpose. Or stay," he added reflectively, "there are a quantity of female slaves in camp for whom there can be no possible use if we are going to embark upon such a prolonged campaign. I would suggest that a commencement be made on them; they will be tenderer eating than Iberian mountaineers, and less repulsive to the stomach to begin upon."

Hannibal and the other warriors stared aghast at this suggestion.

Chæras made a wry face and felt sick, for he knew well that

the butcher Monomachus was quite capable of killing an eating anything or anybody. General Hanno took the suggetion seriously.

"I have never yet eaten human flesh," he said, "but the Admiral of my own name, the Hanno who before the fir Roman war made a voyage half round Western Africa, reported on his return that he met in his travels many nations who disso, killing and eating the prisoners they made in war. And these man-eaters were fierce and courageous people, too, might therefore be tried in case of necessity, and even have salutary effect upon the courage of the troops; but I see no use in practising upon our female slaves, or on the Iberia prisoners beforehand. But what thinkest thou thysel Hannibal?"

Although Hannibal always did exactly what he intended t do himself, he nevertheless frequently paid his friends an generals the compliment of appearing to listen to their advicable therefore answered:

"There is something in it, certainly; it is really not a ba idea at all. But I am rather of thy opinion, Hanno, that ther is no occasion to start yet, while we are still in a land when sheep and oxen are plentiful."

"My lord Hannibal," said Sosilus, who had, during thes remarks, been casting up some figures on a paper, "I hav certain important facts to put before thee."

"Speak out, oh Sosilus!" said his chief; "what hast tho to say?"

"I have this to say, that, according to the custom of war i all countries, I have been reckoning up the forces. Now, a though my habit of reading everything that is ever written ma be thought foolish, and, moreover, my habit of rememberin and quoting the same may be thought more unnecessary stil the scoffers who laugh at me," and he glared at Chœras, "ar themselves those who should be considered asses. No recently I came, after the slaughter at Saguntum, upon th body of one of the Roman officers who was being rifled by on of the mercenaries. I saw the man withdraw from the breas

of this officer a roll of papers, which he contemptuously cast aside. I picked it up, and studied it with a view to embodiment in my treatise upon 'Rome in her Relations to the Barbarians, Political, Social, and Military,' of anything of importance that I could find therein. And this have I found therein. most noble Hannibal—that if thou wouldst attack Rome, the number of the forces of Rome and her various allies in Italia at the present moment amount to the astonishing and alarming number of no less than 700,000 infantry and about 70,000 This was, of course, only the number reckoned available during the recent war against the Gauls in Cis-Alpine But I can give it to thee, chapter and verse, an Actual Romans, say about forty-four thousand: thou wilt. Etruscans, fifty-four thousand: Sabines, also fifty-four thousand: Apulians, Picenians, Campanians, and Umbrians, in equal proportions, and so on. It is, however, scarcely necessary to give in detail all the allies. The total, during the recent Roman war with the Gauls, of men capable of bearing arms, was enumerated as I have stated. I have again, on the other hand, worked out here the number of forces which thou hast at thy command now in Iberia. Reckoning the enormous addition to the power of Carthage caused by the favourable result of the recent mission of our worthy young friend here Maharbal, I find that thou hast, at the very outside. available only about one hundred thousand men against the Roman seven hundred and seventy thousand. This seemeth to me a somewhat undue preponderance on the other side, especially when it hath to be considered that thou must leave a sufficient garrison to hold the whole of Spain, and likewise must despatch many troops over into Libya ere thou canst thyself take the field. My lord Hannibal, I am fully aware of the fact that the only advantage that I can be to thee, shouldst thou select me to accompany thee upon this war, will be that I may become thy historian; but still I would point out to thee that, according to Homer, to quote parallel cases, the inhabitants of Argos, before they set out for the siege of Trov. reckoned that--"

"Yes. ves. never mind Troy," remarked Hannibal, dreading the parallel cases; "thine own information is very important and most opportune just now. I must have it all out chapter and verse later. Our troops are certainly very insufficient for the purpose as far as numbers go; but look at our training and the constant warfare in which we have been engaged. That is where we shall reap the advantage, even as did my father Hamilcar at Mounts Ercte and Eryx. But I intend to go. I intend to leave, perhaps for ever, this fair country of Iberia. where, if I would, I might be supreme king; this country where I have fought and loved-loved and fought ever since I was a mere boy—and I intend to humble the power of the accursed Romans or perish in the attempt. And I have thought out the way, and I shall do it. Ay, by the gods I shall do it! I will slay the Romans in their thousands, and upon their own soil too; I will avenge all the insults and the treachery they have put upon Carthage; and thou, Sosilus, shalt live to see it and chronicle it also, an thou wilt. At all events, thou shalt accompany me, for thy memory is so retentive, that when mine own fails thou shalt supply the deficiency."

There was a slight pause here in the conversation, for the enormous disparity in numbers between the Roman and the Carthaginian forces likely to be opposed to one another gave rise, and naturally so, to much thought among those who were likely to be principal actors in the unequal war. Presently Silenus spoke. He was by birth a Macedonian Greek, a little dark man, young, and very wiry-looking, and well knit, with singularly sweet, engaging features.

"Hannibal," he said, "of course since I have written all thy letters, I have known all about these alliances that thou hast been concluding with the Gauls, most of which, in my opinion, are of but doubtful value. But of other things, for instance, thine own private motives for undertaking this war in such a very remarkable way I know nothing. However, since thou hast assembled us all here in an informal manner around the wine bowl, and disclosed certain of thy plans, would it

seem indiscreet of me were I to ask thee openly a question?

"Ask anything thou choosest, and I will answer or not, as I see fit."

"Well, then, I will before all enter into the question of General Hanno's remarks—or was it Monomachus? I forget which—about invading Italia by sea, which, since we have the fleet, would naturally seem the easiest way. Well, Hannibal. wherefore, by all the gods of all the known world! shouldst thou, having got the fleet, enter upon this war, or rather this invasion of Italia, in such a hazardous manner by land, thus cutting thyself off as thou wilt do from all thy communications? Why not, instead of invading Italia—by doing which thou wilt be at a disadvantage—let the Romans come here, as they will, and attack us. Here thou knowest the ground and the people. Here by the recent alliance concluded through Maharbal and his affianced wife Melania, thou hast gained important alliestrustworthy, no doubt, while thou art here to watch them, Why then not stay here, where thou art supreme, and let the Romans come, and then destroy them in detail, instead of thrusting thyself, as thou must, with a comparatively small force into the midst of a terrible hornet's nest against fearful odds? I would, in sooth, like to know thy reason, for although I offer no counsel, well-knowing thou takest counsel from no man, it may be instructive to all of us here present to know hereafter what are the reasons which impel thee to undertake this most wonderful—this most gigantic enterprise."

CHAPTER IIL

HANNIBAL'S DREAM.

HANNIBAL rose from his seat, called for a cup of wine, tasted it, put it down, walked up and down the room, sipped at his wine again as if in thought, before he replied. At last he answered:

"After deep thought I have decided. Well, I think that I may tell unto ye all my mission, for it is a mission of the gods. I cannot tell whether or no it may be ultimately successful, but of one thing am I assured, I shall, for a time, at all events, be the means of humbling this trebly accursed State of Rome, which is gradually diminishing all the ancient power of Phœnicia, and hath already wrested the whole of Sicily from her grasp in honest fight, and won also from the Punic rule, but by fraud, the fair isle of Sardinia.

"Listen now. I went, as ye all know, not long since—that is, directly after my return to New Carthage after we had captured this place, Saguntum—on a pilgrimage. That pilgrimage was to the temple of Melcareth in Gades. Now Gades is, perhaps, the oldest Phœnician settlement in the whole of Iberia. Its origin is so old that the records cannot tell whether the earliest inhabitants of Gades came from Tyre or from Sidon, but they are pure Phœnicians to this day, and as such worship the great invisible god Melcareth. Their language is not quite the same as our own, and is somewhat mixed with Greek—it hath, withal, a slight admixture of the Iberian tongue; but all their religious customs are most pure and holy. And the temple in Gades of the great god Melcareth is worthy in its architecture of all the highest civilisation of the country of Carthage as it was when I remember it as a boy. There is a

peculiar solemnity about the temple, and upon first entering it I was struck by the evident presence of the omnipotent being. I fell upon my face, overpowered by this feeling, just within the threshold: but a hoary-headed priest came forward. raised me up, and, with comforting words, led me towards the There, feeling all the time that I was actually in the presence of an omnipotent being, I accomplished my sacrifice. plunged my right arm in the blood, and renewed solemnly the oath which I made when but a boy of nine in the presence of my father Hamilcar. This oath was one of eternal hatred against the Romans, and of life-long effort to reduce the pride of these enemies of our country. I must tell ye, that having no son, I took with me my daughter Elissa, and made her swear the same oath as I swore when a boy. Closely veiled she was, and humble as becometh one worshipping the gods. I also made her vow to the gods that all her life she should devote herself to her country, even as had she been my son instead of my daughter, and that, henceforth, whatever the past had been, self was to be held of no account, but that her nation's welfare was before everything to be considered. I swore the same oath with her.

"The priests left us alone at length, in meditation on our knees before the altar of the almighty Melcareth. The sacrificial fire burned low, only an occasional gleam flared up from the glowing embers. Daylight faded away into utter darkness. Overcome by the sense of the solemnity of the holy place, and the soporific effect of the smoke and the simmering incense, both my daughter and myself fell upon our faces at length in a kind of stupor. Suddenly the whole gloom of the mighty fane became illumined with a brilliant light. My daughter and I both sprung up, and our eyes were dazzled as we saw the great god Melcareth appear in person before us. My daughter almost instantly sunk senseless before the divinity; but not so I. The god stretched out his hand towards me and uttered the following words:—

"'Hannibal, son of Hamilcar, thou shalt avenge thy father's misfortunes. Great shall be thy glory, but great also shall be

thy downfall. Strive, nevertheless, strive to the end; thou shalt reap thy reward hereafter, and thy name shall never die. Yea, I am the great god Melcareth, who will ever have thee in my protection. In good days or in evil days rest upon my bosom, for even in the evil days I will be near thee, although thou seest me not. Now sleep, my son, sleep, and thy destiny shall be revealed unto thee by me in a dream.'

"Gradually the blazing light and the resplendent figure of the god faded away. I sank upon my face before the glowing altar fire and slept. And I dreamt a dream. At least it was not a dream that I dreamt, but a vision that I experienced.

"Suddenly I found myself translated into a wonderful dazzling abode of light, where, sitting in a beautiful garden, were present all the gods of Carthage. Melcareth was there, and Tanais. Towering above all the others stood Moloch, and fierce indeed and terrible was he of aspect, and yet he ever smiled and the fixed angry look upon his face ever relaxed when Tanais addressed him, which she did frequently. As for Tanais, whom we also call Astarte, no radiant vision of beautiful young womanhood that man's soul or brain hath ever imagined can realise her excessive, delightful, and bewitching beauty.

"'Moloch,' quoth she, 'Moloch, my well-beloved, be not angry, for I must embrace this Hannibal, the son of Hamilcar, although, indeed, he worshippeth thee and not me upon earth; yet, for all thy frowns, will I now take him to my bosom.'

"Then, although at first Moloch frowned, I saw him smile when she bade me approach, which I did without the least fear.

"'Embrace me, Hannibal,' she said; 'I am the goddess Tanais, whom thy daughter Elissa worshippeth. Fear not Moloch; he loveth thee for all his frowns, for thou shalt give unto him many victims of the Roman people whom he loveth not, since they believe not in him. But I love all people alike, for I am the goddess of love, and love is in all nations: 'Tis I who plant the little seedling of love in each young maiden's heart; 'tis I, too, who teach the warrior that there is one divinity yet more powerful than Moloch, and more—ay, far

more fatal. For my votaries—ay, even the votaries of love—commit more crimes, more murders, more atrocities, more deceits, more robberies in my name in a month, than do all those of Moloch in a year. Thus is Moloch, who is mine own lover, yet jealous of me, although through me most mortals play into his hands. Yet so hast thou not done through me as yet, Hannibal, yet hath thy daughter Elissa already, and there are more victims to come to him through her. See! beneath Moloch's hand, one is there.' I looked, and saw the figure of Adherbal, the son of Hanno. I knew not how I knew him, but he it was—I knew it. And then Moloch spoke in a voice of thunder:

"'Ay, 'tis true, Elissa! dost thou see? Thou shalt give me another victim soon.' Turning, I saw Elissa behind me, standing as in a spirit form. I suppose now that the other victim to whom the god referred was that Idherbal, whom thou didst slay the other day, Maharbal. But after that I saw Elissa no more. Then the goddess Tanais drew me to her, and pressed me on her bosom, and kissed me, and breathed the spirit of divinity into me, while Moloch looked on, and smiling said,

"'Ay, my fair queen of love! make love to him. I permit it this time. for he is beloved of me, indeed.'

"But she only laughed, and replied, 'I make love to him because I love him, and not at all for thee, Moloch; dost thou not know that warriors are always beloved of women?' Whereupon he frowned and turned away, while the goddess bade me kiss her, and fondled me again, but I feared her. Then she reproached me, with a gentle whisper in mine ear, that I did not show myself even in heaven a much more ardent devotee than on earth, although, she said, she knew that I worshipped occasionally at her shrine. But Melcareth coming forward, she released me from her embrace, and with Moloch retired. The other gods and goddesses also fell far behind, for Melcareth is king of heaven, and so grand, so powerful, and yet so placid, it seemeth as though all heaven and earth is in his single look. I trembled before him—ay, and fell to the ground; yet never had I so trembled before the terrible

Moloch. Melcareth, the almighty one, touched me and I trose.

"'Hannibal, son of Hamilcar,' said he, 'I have here ready a guide for thee who shall show thee the course that thou art to pursue. Now follow him, but stay; first bid farewell to Tanais, for thou wilt not henceforth have much time for the delights of love; thou must leave that to thy daughter, who is in the goddess's especial favour.'

"The goddess Tanais once more took me in her arms and embraced me.

"'Go,' she said, 'fight well for the might of Carthage, mine own beloved city. I will welcome thee back to my bosom some day. Meanwhile, do Moloch's work—he loveth blood.'

"The god Moloch, still keeping in the background, waved his hand to me in token of farewell; then the great Melcareth simply touched me again, and I found myself flying through space side by side with a messenger like unto the Roman god Mercury, saving that he had no wings on head or feet, but merely moved onward by voluntary volition, as did I accompanying him.

"We travelled for a long time over lands, seas, rivers, and mountains. 'See thou look not back,' said my guide. But curiosity overcame me at length and I looked back. Awful was the sight I saw behind me. A huge, ghastly monster with fiery breath issuing from his mouth, having gigantic wings and horrid claws of iron on his feet, was following in our wake destroying everything we passed over as we sped by cities, houses, farms, and vineyards.

"'What, oh, what is this terrible creature behind us?' I asked of my spirit guide as we sped through the air.

"'It is the devastation of Italia, oh Hannibal,' said he. 'See that thou dost march ever straight onwards, careless o this monster which shall ever follow in thy rear. Neither le rivers nor mountains, cultivated lands nor olive grove meadows nor marshlands turn thee aside, but march the onward ever straight through Italia from end to end, and lea the rest in the hands of the gods. So now I leave thee.'

"He left me as we were hovering over the roof of the temple of Melcareth in Gades. Shortly after, I awoke from what seemed a profound sleep before the altar, and arousing my daughter, who was still sleeping, I arose. For henceforth I knew my fate. It was to be the conquest and destruction of Italia. Now, my noble companions, ye know that if I invade the Roman dominions it is simply by the command of the gods—ay! at the divine will. I therefore have no choice but to overrun Italia from end to end."

Hannibal ceased speaking, and silence fell upon all present. Every man there was a firm believer in the gods, therefore none of them doubted for an instant that a supernatural power was directing Hannibal to commence this immense undertaking, and would assist him in carrying it through against fearful odds.

Presently Mago spoke.

"Tis evident indeed that thou hast a divine mission, oh my brother, and that it is to thyself invade, without waiting to be invaded. And thou hadst a wonderful vision, would to heaven that I had seen it, too. And did the queen of heaven and of love herself really embrace thee? Had it been me, then I vow by the sweet goddess herself that never again should mortal woman's lips touch mine so long as I live."

"A rash yow that of thine," quoth Chœras,

*** For sweet as wine are woman's lips, And who with each shall toy, No sooner tasteth as he sips But he would more enjoy.'

Yet 'tis a safe enough vow for thee to make under the circumstances. And verily I too believe that had such an honour been vouchsafed unto me by the blessed Tanais, our worthy friend Sosilus yonder would never again need to reproach me of being too fond of any mortal woman's lips. But 'twas indeed a glorious vision which it was given unto our commander to behold; and now, knowing that he hath the protection of the gods, not only will he himself, but we his

followers also, start with hope rising buoyant in our hearts upon such a march as the world hath hitherto never heard of, nay, nor dreamed of. I who, since from sheer idleness I came over from Carthage last year, have been but a mere volunteer on Hannibal's staff, am so deeply impressed by what he hath told us, that I shall now ask his permission to enrol myself regularly under his flag. For with the noble mission that is so clearly marked out for him, who would not ask to follow him to death or glory? Prithee, Hannibal, wilt take me under thy colours as a regular soldier henceforth, for I, too, would fain march with thee to Italia?"

"Av. willingly will I take thee, Chæras, and as many more Carthaginian nobles as may choose to come over and join us in striking at the same time a blow in defence of their country, and a blow at the prestige and power of Rome. Ay, readily will I enrol thee, and, since thou ridest well, I will appoint thee as one of Maharbal's lieutenants in the Numidian Will that suit thee? and thee, too, Maharbal, wilt thou have Chœras? I found him efficient as a member of my staff, and a brave rider withal—with a bridle and a saddle, that is, but certainly not in the Numidian style, without either saddle or bridle, or with only a halter; of that he hath as yet had no experience. But thou wilt have to give him lessons. Maharbal, for, although ye commanders certainly ride not always in that fashion, yet no officer should be unable to do whatever his men can do. And of that thou, Maharbal, art indeed thyself a notable example. So now, Chœras, consider thy petition granted. Thou art appointed to the mounted branch of the service from this minute. Art thou satisfied?"

Chœras made a most gruesome and comical grimace.

"Many thanks, most noble Hannibal; but, since I am by thy favour to be appointed to the mounted branch of the service, and to learn to ride without a saddle or bridle, dost not think that it would be more seemly, and that there would be somewhat less chance of my coming to an untimely end at the very beginning of the war, were I appointed to the elephant corps? I might, moreover, take Sosilus up behind

me to remind me of parallel cases, as applied to ships, whenever the brute refused to steer, for he was, so I have heard, brought up as a sailor when but a lad. Thus, I could place him by the tail to steer the beast, and then, I am convinced, I could speedily learn to ride without either saddle or bridle. But, I confess, I have my misgivings about being able to stick on any bare-backed beast smaller than a good-sized elephant, certainly not a fiery Numidian charger. And wherever I go, for the sake of the good precepts he would instil, I should decidedly like to have the advantage of our good Sosilus's society. Therefore, my Lord Hannibal, mount me, I prithee, on an elephant!"

There was some merriment at these comical objections of Chæras, who was a licensed jester, amid which the party broke up, Maharbal having laughingly promised him that, for fear of losing his valuable services all too soon, he would provide him with both saddle and bridle until the completion of at least the first campaign.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST BLOOD.

THERE had been plenty of stiff fighting before Hannibal succeeded, with his army of seventy thousand of all arms, in getting across the Pyrenees into the country of Gallia, for the Celts held strong positions in which to resist the invaders. But he crossed the mountains at last, and, having left his brother, Hasdrubal, with fifteen thousand Libyans, to garrison Spain, and sent an equal number of Iberians over into Libya, the Carthaginian Commander had pursued his advance without further resistance until he reached the banks of the Rhone, about three days' march north of Massilia, or Marseilles.

Here he proceeded to make a camp and prepare for crossing the wide and swift river Rhodanus. Boats and canoes were purchased in abundance; a great number of soldiers were employed in cutting down trees and making rafts for the transport of the elephants, and, with the sawing and hammering that went on, the whole camp soon resembled an enormous workshop. Meanwhile, the natives were collecting in large numbers on the other bank of the Rhone to dispute his passage.

Sitting round the camp fire one night, Hannibal held a conclave of his officers.

"We must make speedy haste, oh, mine officers," he said, "to cross you deep and mighty river despite the hordes of barbarians who guard its further bank, for to-day grave and unexpected tidings have come to hand. The Romans have landed at Massilia; ay, the Consul Paullus Cornelius Scipio himself, so say the Gauls, accompanied by his brother, Cnœus Cornelius Scipio, has suddenly landed and formed a camp at

Massilia. It seemeth that he is proceeding with a fleet and large army to Iberia to meet me there, and hath disembarked for provisions; but, doubtless, he will ere this have learnt that he need not go so far as Spain to find Hannibal or Hannibal's army. But 'tis not here in Cis-Alpine Gaul that I would meet him; nevertheless, we must, while pursuing our previous plans for forcing the river crossing, despatch at once a force to the southward to ascertain, if possible, his numbers and his present intentions. General Maharbal, thine shall be this duty. Warn, therefore, five hundred of thy Numidians after their supper to be ready to start with thee in the first hour of the morning watch. Take native guides with thee, and march with all due precaution towards Massilia, and strive to find out the numbers and dispositions of the Roman Consul's troops.

"It shall be done at once, my lord," replied Maharbal, saluting, and departing to that part of the camp where his horsemen were encamped.

"To thee Hanno, son of Bomilcar," continued the Commander. "is assigned another and most arduous duty, and one upon the skilful accomplishment of which depends the whole future of the campaign. For thou must, with five thousand Numidian and Iberian infantry, march in a couple of hours Take guides with thee, and, avoiding time to the northward. the bank of the river, strike it again at daylight. There procure boats or make rafts, or, by any means, make a crossing before the Gauls can assemble to dispute thy passage, which, if possible, must be made without their knowledge. Then, tomorrow night, descend the other bank, and, at daybreak, raise a thick smoke from the high hills behind the encampment of the Gauls now opposing us. When I see that smoke, I will commence to cross the river in face of the enemy, who, watching us, will, if the fates are propitious, not observe thee. Then, when they are opposing our landing, do thou fall suddenly upon their camp and themselves. Thus will they be caught between both armies at once, and, by Melcareth! 'twill be odds but that not many of them survive to tell the tale of their discomfiture."

'Twas now General Hanno's turn to salute and march out, to warn his officers and men for the important service which lay before them. To the rest of his officers, Hannibal now gave certain instructions for the morrow's duties, and shortly afterwards all in the camp, except those on guard, or warned for the duties above-detailed, had retired to their tents for the night.

Long before daybreak, Maharbal and his men were on the march, and riding cautiously towards the south. Shortly after dawn he halted his men for a time in a wood for purposes of repose, while he himself, taking a fresh horse and accompanied by a few followers, rode well in advance without seeing any signs of an enemy: Returning, he sent forward his advance guard, then, followed by all his men, drawn up in a single line of horsemen, two deep at loose intervals, he himself advanced in succession. They traversed a plain, and the horsemen of the advanced guard disappeared over the crest of a sloping hill. to the summit of which Maharbal had himself recently ascended without perceiving any danger, when suddenly the men of the advanced party were seen galloping back in disorder, while behind and among them, pursuing and striving to cut them down. was seen a large and martial body of mounted men in bright, burnished armour. From the crests of their helmets, which glittered in the morning sun, there streamed long dved plumes of crimson horsehair. A noble sight and awesome they were, as, with so little warning, the squadrons came thundering down the slope upon the Numidians.

"The Romans!" cried every man, astonished; "the Romans!" And for a moment they wavered, for it was the first time any there, including the commander, had met the dreaded and world-renowned foe in mortal combat.

But Maharbal took in the situation at a glance. He saw in a second that although the Romans had the advantage of the ground, charging, as they were, down hill, that they were numerically inferior to his own force.

"Be not alarmed, men," he cried; "we are more than they; we shall defeat them. Prefect Chœras, take thou a hundred

men well away to the right instantly, and fall upon their flank and rear. The remainder follow me. Charge!"

In a second the two forces met in all the shock of battle. And then for a while the contest was bloody and hand to hand, neither side gaining any advantage. But presently the Numidians, by separating, wheeling, and retiring in groups of twos and threes, then advancing again and flinging their darts, then once more retiring, commenced absolutely to get the better of the Roman cavalry, who, not understanding these tactics, kept in a solid formation. Then the wag and poet, Chæras, fell upon them with his hundred men from the rear, and broke them up, and they turned for flight. Chœras, as he led his men, with blood dripping from his sword, pursued, shouting out the while many a well-timed jest and gibe in the Latin tongue, which he knew well. But, alas! the Carthaginians' triumph was short lived, for suddenly, from behind the hill up which the flying Romans were being pursued by the scattered groups of Numidians, there appeared a fresh body of mounted troops, led by a commander who was but a lad. There were a considerable force of Gallic allies from the tribes faithful to Rome inhabiting the district of Massilia. Right gallantly they now in turn charged down the hill, leaving openings between their squadrons for the flying Romans to pass through, then closing their ranks again. was now, after a short but hopeless stand, the turn of the Numidians to fly, for they were overpowered entirely, and especially the body of horse with Chœras, which suffered At length, despite the efforts of Maharbal, his men were all in full retreat, leaving many corpses behind them on the plain: As for Maharbal himself, he stood to the last. had a fresh and magnificent horse, and knew that he could escape if he would. But he wished to die where he stood rather than turn back defeated to the camp and his commander.

Proudly, and all alone, sword in hand, he sat upon his charger awaiting the onslaught of the Gauls, resolving to kill as many as possible ere he was slain himself. But their youthful

commander, evidently a young Roman officer, was mounted on a far fleeter horse than the rest of his troops, and galloping forward sought to engage Maharbal in single combat.

"Defend thyself, proud Carthaginian," the young man cried aloud in Greek. "For I am Scipio's son, and will bear back thy head to my father." And he charged Maharbal.

"And I am Maharbal, the son of Manissa," cried the other, in the same language, "but thou shalt not bear back my head this day."

Wheeling his horse skilfully to one side, Maharbal easily avoided the young man's blow, delivered as he passed, then, turning his horse, pursued the gallant young Roman. In a few strides he was alongside. Dropping his reins, which he could well ride without, he placed his mighty left arm around the waist of the Roman lad, and urging his own charger forward, bore him bodily from his saddle, a prisoner in his terrible grip. In his futile struggles, young Scipio dropped his sword, and thus found himself being carried away defenceless across the withers of Maharbal's magnificent war horse.

"I could kill thee if I would, my fine young fellow," said Maharbal; "but thou art too brave a cockerel. I will keep thee alive instead for a slave."

A howl of rage arose from the pursuing Gauls, and from the now rallying Romans, but for stadia after stadia Maharbal still kept ahead, following his own flying troops, until, at length, he saw the Carthaginian camp in front, and but a short distance He saw, too, a body of cavalry forming up to come to his assistance without the entrenchments. Another minute and he would have been safe with his prisoner, when his gallant steed struck a piece of fallen timber, stumbled, and fell. throwing the two men far apart, Maharbal himself being stunned in the fall. He knew no more until he found himself, on returning consciousness, in Hannibal's own tent, not much the worse for his fall, although very stiff from having been trampled on in the melée which had taken place over the prostrate bodies of himself and young Scipio, which melée had resulted in each side reclaiming its own champion.

Maharbal's personal bravery in this sanguinary action—in which he had lost, in killed alone, two hundred men, and the Romans one hundred and forty—had saved him from the disgrace, which he would otherwise have incurred, owing to his repulse. Seeing, however, what had happened, despite the reverse, the young Numidian warrior only found that his reputation was considerably enhanced throughout the army by his brilliant feat in carrying off the son of the Roman Consul.

All the day following this brilliant action, Hannibal Monomachus, with all his pioneers, especially with the aid of a prefect of pioneers, named Hasdrubal, was busily employed in building large rafts upon which to transport the thirty-seven elephants present with the army across the river. As these huge beasts distinctly refused to allow their Indian drivers to make them swim, he accomplished his purpose in another Making two large rafts, they were attached to the manner. shore, and covered thickly with earth and brushwood, so as to look like land, and built up to a level with the bank: Then two other rafts were constructed on a similar plan, and fitted carefully, and fastened with ropes to those tied to the shore. These were placed further out in the stream, being held in position by ropes attached to wherries anchored up the stream. The joins between the two sets of rafts were not visible to the elephants, who, thinking they were still on land, allowed themselves to be driven on to the outer rafts, where they were tethered until the time for the crossing should come. thus the day passed, and by the following dawn all was ready.

The first division of the army embarked in the wherries and canoes, the heavy armed cavalry men being in the former, two men in the stern of each boat holding five horses apiece by the bridles, these horses swimming. The wherries were placed up the stream, so as to break the current for the canoes below. The infantry soldiers embarked in their canoes. Thus, all was in readiness, while Hannibal and his officers remained watching for the signal. Suddenly first a thin and then a dense column of smoke was seen rising through the trees in rear of the camp of the Gauls.

"Advance!" cried Hannibal, himself springing into a boat.

"Advance!" cried Mago, Chœras, Maharbal, and all the other officers:

Then, with a deafening cheer from the army in the boats, and deafening cheers also of encouragement from their comrades left upon the bank, the flotilla was set in motion. The Gauls, meanwhile, had assembled in their thousands upon the opposite shore, and, waving their spears, and shouting their hoarse war-cries, were gallantly awaiting their advancing foe.

Suddenly cries of alarm were heard from the Gallic ranks, as flames of fire were seen arising from the tents of their encampment, which they had left without a guard. Disconcerted, they turned their backs to the enemy on the river, to find themselves confronted by another and unexpected foe in the rear. General Hanno and all his men were upon them.

Rapidly the boats, amid renewed cheering, pushed to the shore; rapidly, too, were the first division landed and drawn up on the beach: Then ensued such a scene of carnage in the Gallic ranks as had never yet been heard of. In less than an hour Hannibal's boast was fulfilled, and scarcely a man was left to tell the tale. Thus was accomplished the passage of the Rhone.

CHAPTER V.

AT THE FOOT OF THE ALPS.

WHEN the carnage was completed and the last blow struck, Hannibal sent for his general of engineers. Monomachus shortly appeared before him, sword in hand, panting for breath, and covered with blood from head to foot. A large and long gash upon his swarthy cheek by no means lessened the ferocity of his appearance, at which Chœras, who was standing by, tittered audibly.

"Wherefore hast thou this most sanguinary aspect, oh my chief of pioneers?" quoth the general, in a tone of assumed severity, for he was really in high good humour. "Thou hast surely not quitted thy post on the opposite bank, where thy duties were to complete and guard the means of transport across the river, and joined in the fight wherewith thy duties had neither part nor parcel?"

Before replying, Monomachus calmly piled three corpses of the Gauls together, two below and then one on the top, upon which gruesome group he seated himself as comfortably as possible. Then wiping the blood streaming from his face, he replied:

"Nay, thanks be to the gods! I had no cause to leave my post on the elephant rafts to be able to slay a few of the cursed barbarians. But a party of about a dozen of them had in flight seized a boat, and, by the mercy of Moloch, just as I was fretting at mine inaction, they chanced to come my way. So I just killed the lot. One fellow, however, proved a bit nasty, and gave me this little remembrance." Again he wiped his face. "He was the last of them all," he continued, "so I had, fortunately, time to make an example of him, although he

fought hard, and scarcely seemed to appreciate my kind attentions."

"What didst thou do?" questioned Hannibal.

The butcher grinned ferociously, but made no reply at first.

"How didst thou make an example of him?" again questioned his commander.

"I took him by the waist," answered Monomachus, "and, for all his struggles and cries, thrust his head into the mouth of that savage bull elephant, that king of beasts whom the men call Moloch. It was the champing up of his skull that has caused my armour and clothing to thus become somewhat discoloured." And he looked down with a grim glance of satisfaction at his bloody attire:

"Methinks' tis thou who should be named the king of beasts more rightly than the elephant after such an exploit as that; but, for all that, I thank thee, Monomachus, for thy skilful arrangements for the crossing of the river, and likewise for thy gallant defence of the raft, for Sosilus here, who was by me, taking notes as usual, pointed thee out to me while engaged in first killing the runaway Gauls, and then feeding the elephant on such unaccustomed food; and, by my troth, I think I saw thee slay nearer twenty than twelve of the barbarians. What was the exact number of them, by the by, Sosilus?"

"Ay," responded the sage, "the carnage being almost completed on this bank, I, with a view to some amplifications of a work I am commencing, called, 'Duties and Developments of Modern Warfare,' turned my attention to thee, oh Monomachus! after having first noted that foolish young man, Chœras, finishing off, in most artistic style, a naked Gaul of twice his size, with whom he had been indulging in a somewhat prolonged combat. I requested him then to assist me in checking the numbers of the Gauls, whom thou mightest thyself despatch single-handed, which amounted in grand total to just—so Chœras reckoned—eighteen and a half."

"Eighteen and a half?" grumped out the man of blood. "How could I kill eighteen men and a half? It must have

been either eighteen or nineteen. I could not kill half a man."

"Easily enough," here interrupted Chœras, who was answerable for the numbers. "First thou didst slay eighteen barbarians, then thou didst half-kill a nineteenth. The remainder of him thou gavest, oh most bloody Monomachus, unto the elephant. Hence thou hast for thine own grand total of slain got evidently only eighteen and a half. And thus thou thyself hast killed half a man. It is simple enough when thou understandeth arithmetic."

The jest was a good enough one for the occasion. Monomachus, who was not pleased at it, however, growled out a curse at Chœras and his flippant tongue, while Hannibal laughed outright.

"Well, repose thyself awhile on thy ghastly but apparently comfortable couch, oh thou slayer of half men, or half slayer of whole men, to quote Chœras, and then bring across the elephants. This evening will do, for the army will rest here until mid-day, and the cavalry and elephants, with which both I and thou will remain, will form the rear guard. After mid-day, the remainder of the army will march northward up the river, but we will ourselves first destroy the boats and rafts, and then follow. Should Scipio wish to cross in turn, he will be somewhat puzzled, I fancy. We will take our lightly-wounded with us on the elephants and spare horses; the rest, I regret to say, we shall have to destroy to avoid the risk they will otherwise run of torture or crucifixion if left behind. But now, methinks, we all want some food and wine, of which, fortunately, plenty hath been captured here."

While Hannibal and Monomachus were talking, Mago and Maharbal rode up. The latter looked none the worse for his fall on the previous day, and both were flushed with the delights of victory. Mago threw himself from his horse and embraced his brother, after first throwing at his feet a mass of golden collars and necklaces he had brought in as spoils. Maharbal modestly remained by his horse after saluting the Chief. He also unloaded many spoils of golden ornaments,

and laid them on the ground. He was unwounded and triumphant, his sword red with gore from point to hilt; but he was too exhausted to utter a word. He had that day, indeed, dealt death to many a Gaul, and richly revenged his reverse at the hands of Scipio's cavalry. Hannibal knew how to reward valour, and knew also full well the meaning of the old Roman proverb that he gives twice who gives quickly. Taking his own necklace, he threw it round Maharbal's neck. Taking his own sword, he presented it to his general, Hanno, son of Bomilcar. To his brother Mago he gave nothing, save a return of the salute that his brother had given to him and a compliment.

"Mago, I knew already that thou wert my brother; this day thou hast proved also that thou art the son of Hamilcar." And he fell upon his brother's neck.

The troops, crowding round, shouted till they were hoarse in acclamation of this pithy sentence, and then the whole camp became for an hour or two a camp of rest.

A few days later, the whole Carthaginian army, having marched to the northward, found itself in the country of the Allobroges. These people were not particularly the allies of Rome, yet were subsidised by them, and therefore hostile to Hannibal. They were a race inhabiting the slopes of the Alps. and very warlike. Their numbers were great, and the mixed troops of the Carthaginian army were excessively alarmed at the opposition that they were likely to receive from this very hostile people. But a strange and lucky chance intervened. At the foot of the passes of the Alps, the advancing Carthaginian army suddenly came upon two armies, drawn up in warlike array, about to attack each other These armies were those of a certain king of the Gauls and his brother, who were at war for the succession. Each sent to him, before the battle commenced, envoys asking his help. Hannibal instantly threw in his lot with the elder brother, and together they fell upon the other, and, after a short but bloody fight. routed him completely. After this the Carthaginian troops were so welcomed with wine and food, and every other species

of enjoyment, that for a day or two all discipline was relaxed in the camp, and all hardships forgotten. And then the Gallic king, having furnished the invaders with all kind of provisions, with new weapons, with pack horses and mules, ay, even boots for all the army, set forth with them, giving guides for an advance guard across the first Alpine ranges, and himself, with all his own forces, forming a rear guard for the army for protection against the Allobroges. But at the foot of the Alps, with many regrets, he left Hannibal, for this king of the Gauls was not strong enough to leave his own kingdom further.

Abandoned by their ally, the Carthaginian forces were appalled as they reached the foot of the first range, for from the plain below every vantage point could be seen gleaming with the spears of the Allobroges, who were determined to resist to the death the further advance of the Phœnician forces.

The enemy crowded every mountain-top; they thronged in the pass itself; it looked, indeed, as if the way were barred as by bars of iron. At least, so it seemed to all the army, except to the brave and astute Commander himself. For a few days he encamped at the foot of the pass, remaining inactive, and resting his men. During this period, the worthy Sosilus frequently pointed out that, according to parallel cases, the only thing to be done was to go round and advance by some other way. Chæras, likewise, when appealed to in council round the camp fire, merely broke forth into verse. He did not like mountain warfare; the plains suited him far better as a cavalry soldier; further, he was one of those who wanted first to go back to the coast, fight and defeat the Romans there, and proceed the rest of the way to Italy by sea.

Therefore, when Hannibal, although well knowing his own mind as usual, merely to keep his officers in good humour, asked the opinion of each, including Chæras, the latter answered while tossing off a cup of wine:—

[&]quot;Most brave Commander, since thou wilt The way seek out, 'tis plain,

For mountains suit not cavalry,
And elephants are wan.
Thus to the low ground keep thy force,
And march south to the coast, ¹
There scowage the Roman with the house
That is thine army's boast.
Then from Iberia fetch the feet,
²Twill danger save and toil,
While we, refresh'd, shall Romans meet
Upon Italian soil.²

Hannibal merely smiled, and then turned to Monomachus "And what wouldst thou do, my blood-thirsty general of engineers? Canst thou not build us a bridge overhead of these barbarians, or else dig us a tunnel below them. For to the other side of the Alps we go or die."

Monomachus rose, and lifting his sword, shook it savagely in the direction of the foe on the heights ere he replied.

"Build thee a bridge, Hannibal? Ay, that can I, if thou but let me head the van. I will build thee a solid bridge over the living with the bodies of the dead. Dig thee a tunnel? Av. that will I also with this good sword, right through their livers and intestines. Tis a kind of engineering that suits me right well, and I long to be at it now. My right arm is grown quite stiff for want of practice; 'tis nigh fifteen days since I have slain a Gaul, for I was engaged in road-mending during thy fight the other day. But now, methinks, the time hath come for my subordinate Hasdrubal to do a little more of the road-making work, and for me to get back to mine old trade of fighting. I must appeal to my good friend Sosilus to find me some parallel cases. Say, oh learned one, hast thou not at thy command some quotation ready from the ninetyninth chapter of the hundred and eleventh book of someone or another wherewith to convince our gallant Commander that I am far more adapted to wield a sword than a pick-axe?"

"Ay, indeed," answered Sosilus readily; "there is just such a case on record, and I have it here in a pamphlet which I have among many others in the pockets of my tunic."

He commenced fumbling in his bosom, but before he had time

to demonstrate with chapter and verse the similarity of the cases, several Gauls arrived on the scene, to whom Hannibal instantly gave private audience in his tent.

They were spies from among the guides supplied by the friendly Gallic king, and they had important news to communicate.

When presently Hannibal re-issued from his tent he once more addressed Monomachus.

"Thy wish shall be granted; thou shalt come with me, and that this very night, and thy weapon in sooth shall be a sword. not a pick-axe. For I find that yonder hostile barbarians stay not on the heights by night, but retire to a town within the hills, of which the name is called, I think, Brundisium, daily re-occupying their posts at dawn. I myself shall therefore creep up the passes this night with a chosen band and occupy the points of vantage whereon we see their armour now shining. At daybreak the rest of the army, under command of General Hanno, will commence the ascent, all the cavalry and the pack animals being placed in the van; then the infantry. Lastly, the elephants will follow with a rear-guard under thy lieutenant Hasdrubal, the pioneer, who will destroy the road after them for a double purpose—to prevent the Gauls from pursuing us, and to prevent our own men from retreating. For. once embarked upon these Alpine passes, there is to be no going backward. We conquer or we die; we do not return."

Then spoke up Mago. "Brother, thou art the Commander-in-chief. It is not meet that thou shouldst go upon this hazardous expedition by night upon these unknown mountain passes. What will the army do if thou shouldst fall either by the hand of the enemy, or over some precipice? General Hanno is, indeed, most worthy of all trust, but it is not to him that the whole force looks for confidence. Therefore, I pray thee, send me forward in thy stead this night, and stay thou here. My life is of little worth—thine all important."

"Not so, Mago," answered Hannibal; "if confidence be needed it will be gained by seeing that the first man to mount the Alpine passes is the Commander-in-chief himself. But give

thou unto me thine own sword, 'tis one of our father Hamilcar's, and will bring me luck this night, for it was blessed in the temple of Moloch in Carthage; mine own I gave unto Hanno. I will wield it in thine honour and mine own, and return it unto thee to-morrow if I yet live. Meanwhile, take thou another from those I have in my tent; I have several there of great value and good metal."

With great ceremony, and invoking the blessing of the gods, Mago arose and invested Hannibal with his sword, a magnificent weapon of truest steel which had, indeed, been borne by Hamilcar in many a fight.

That night all the watch-fires were lighted as usual in front of the Carthaginian lines. Nothing in the camp indicated that an advance was intended, and the Gauls on the heights, deceived completely by the apparent inaction on the part of the foe, retired as usual from the mountain crests crowning the passes, to the shelter of the walled town in the valley on the farther side of this first range of the Alps.

A little before midnight, when the camp fires had burned low, Hannibal himself started from the camp and commenced the dangerous ascent of the mountain. No lights had he and his men to guide their footsteps, but painfully and in silence, they stumbled on, ever upwards, over rock and boulder, until they found and occupied the breastworks which the Gauls had evacuated at nightfall. With Hannibal were Monomachus and Chœras in command of a party of dismounted cavalry. There were, in addition, about one thousand men, who toiled wearily upwards after their bold Commander. It being now near the end of the month of October, cold indeed were the hours of waiting through the night, which this gallant band were compelled to endure in the chilly pass. No moving about was possible after once they had gained their positions, and many a man who had become overheated in the ascent that night contracted a chill that ere long laid him low. was, indeed, a toilsome and terrible night march which these soldiers of a warmer climate had to endure, and many a man stumbled in the dark and fell over the precipices into the roaring torrent below, his armour resounding with many a clang as it beat against the rocks in the wretched man's downward course.

But for those who fell there was no succour. If they were dead, they were dead, and their troubles were over; if they still survived, they were left to die miserably in the dark and gloomy ravines wherein they had fallen. For who could help them? This was merely the commencement of the crossing of the Alps, and they merely the advance party! How many thousand more would fall ere the fair plains of Italy should be won?

At daybreak, the army, under Hanno, commenced in turn the ascent of the pass. The Gauls instantly set forth to intercept them, and crowning the heights, hurled down huge stones and pieces of rock from every side, creating the most terrible distress and confusion among the defenceless infantry men in the pass, and speedily likewise driving the pack horses, mules, and cavalry animals into a state of perfect frenzy. These creatures, many of them being wounded, rushed madly up and down the narrow road, driving hundreds of men over the precipices in their headlong flight, and many of them falling themselves also.

Meanwhile the Allobroges, climbing down the mountain side like goats, pillaged the fallen warriors, after first brutally cutting their throats, pillaged also the fallen pack animals, and in many cases escaped safely again up the further mountain's side with their booty.

Hannibal, however, seeing the terrible confusion into which the whole of his army was thrown by this dreadful onslaught, resolved upon instant action.

"Chœras," quoth he, "take thou three hundred men: Crown these heights on the left of the pass, creep over them, but keep thy force together. Then charge and destroy all the pillagers who have crossed the ravine. I myself, with Monomachus, will charge with our remaining men on the other side of the ravine where the enemy are thickest."

Like an avalanche rushing down the Alps, did Hannibal,

sword in hand, charge at the head of his men down slopes upon which they could scarcely keep their feet, so steep they were, but the steepness added to the impetus of their terrible onrush. The Allobroges turned and fled towards the city of the hills. They were, however, cut down and slaughtered almost to a man; and Hannibal and his men, still cutting down and slaughtering as they advanced, rushed in after the fugitives through the gates of the city. The inhabitants were instantly put to the sword as a warning to other tribes living on the slopes of the mountains, and an enormous booty of cattle, corn, and pack horses was captured.

The city was in a fertile valley, and the army encamped in and round about it for one day to rest.

Thus did Hannibal, by his own personal prowess, although with serious loss to his army, successfully storm the first of the terrible Alpine ranges.

CHAPTER VI.

OVER THE ALPS.

For the next three days the advance up the passes was continued in peace. The Gauls came in, offering garlands and branches of trees in token of goodwill, and gave also hostages and cattle. Hannibal wisely pretended to trust them, thus securing a period of cessation from hostilities; but, in reality, he remained ever on the alert, and made all his dispositions accordingly, keeping his cavalry and pack animals in front to prevent their being cut off, and following in rear himself with all the heavy-armed infantry.

He was not in the least surprised when on the fourth day a determined attack was made upon him by large forces of the enemy, as the army was passing through a long, narrow, and precipitous gorge, where the Gauls once more created terrible confusion among his troops, by rolling down stones and boulders from above, and, by their superior position on the slopes above him, actually for a time cutting him off with the infantry from all the cavalry and baggage animals ahead, among whom terrible losses occurred. The maddened animals dashed hither and thither, and fell over the precipices, many an unfortunate warrior going with them in their headlong flight. But Mago and Maharbal, with indomitable courage, pushed ever onward and upwards despite all obstacles, while for a whole night long Hannibal and the infantry had to take shelter beneath a rock, which was so precipitous that the Gallic tribes themselves were unable to climb it or use it as a point of vantage from which to throw down missiles.

Meanwhile Hasdrubal, the pioneer, following in the extreme rear with the elephants, destroyed the road as he went, thus

making it impossible for any of the army to fly by the road whence they had come. This rear guard was fortunately not attacked, for the Gauls were so terrified by the awful appearance of the elephants, whom they imagined to be evil spirits or malignant gods, that they dared not even to approach the part of the line where they were. When daybreak came, the army emerged from the pass, and the enemy, too terrified to attack in force on more open ground, retired.

At length, after nine more terrible nights and days, during the whole of which the army was being continually harassed by parties of the foe cutting off stragglers or attacking the baggage, the gallant Chief arrived with his army at the head of the pass. Here, despite the bitter cold, he encamped on the snow for a couple of days, to rest his men and wait for stragglers to come up.

The men were now in a deplorable condition, and their spirits at the lowest possible ebb. Therefore, assembling as many of them as possible around him, and pointing to the panorama of the fair plains of Italy below, Hannibal addressed them as follows:

"My gallant troops, difficulty, danger, and death now lie behind us, but before us lie Italy and Rome. Gaze, therefore, before and below ye as conquerors, for all that fair country shall be ours. The tribes below are our friends, and will welcome us heartily. Therefore keep ye up your courage, for soon the spoils of Rome shall reward ye for all your hardships."

The courage of the troops was roused by these words; but alas! if the ascent had been difficult, harder by far was the descent of the mountain slopes. For owing to new snow having fallen upon the old, there was no foothold. Thus men and horses in numbers slipped and fell headlong down the slopes and precipices, rolling over and over, and bounding from rock to rock, to finally land, battered into pulp, thousands of feet below. And then they came to a place where, for a great distance, two land slides and avalanches had carried away the whole mountain-side, and the road with it. Never

daunted, however, Hannibal, Monomachus, and Hasdrubal, his pioneer captain, built in two days, with the Numidian troops, an entirely new road over the mountain-side, over which first the infantry, then the cavalry and baggage animals, and lastly, even the elephants themselves were passed in safety. But all the survivors, both men and animals alike, were nearly dead from starvation, when at length, after fifteen days in the terrible mountains, the snow was left behind, and the land of the Taurini, bordering that of the friendly Insubrian Gauls, was entered on the plains.

But, whereas Hannibal had started to cross the Alps with nearly double that number, when the muster was taken round the camp fires on the first night after the awful journey over the mountains, only twelve thousand Libyans, eight thousand Iberians, and six thousand cavalry of all kinds, were present to answer the roll-call.

And with this small force of starving and disheartened troops Hannibal now prepared to meet all the might of Rome.

So wretched, indeed, were the troops, that not even the fact of their having at length reached the Italian side of the mountains in Cis-Alpine Gaul could at first put any heart into them. It was now the commencement of the month of November, the oak trees were shedding their leaves, and the grass and herbage losing rapidly the succulent qualities necessary to sustain the animals. All traces of cultivation had long since been removed from the fields, while the wind sighed and moaned sadly through those vast forests of pine, the home of the wolf and the wild boar, the shelter of whose gloomy recesses the half-starved army was glad enough to seek.

Biting showers of rain and sleet added to the discomfort of the troops, and at first the Insubrian Gauls showed but little alacrity in bringing in the much-needed provisions. Altogether, now that this remnant of the Carthaginian army had at length reached, after five and a half months' marching, this land of promise, it fell far below their expectations. The whole outlook was indeed so gloomy that there was not an officer nor man in the whole army who did not heartily wish himself back again in his own home in the sunny lands and olive groves of Spain or Libya.

To make things even yet worse, one or two Gallic towns in the neighbourhood, among them notably the city of the Taurini, which might have accorded shelter to the half-famished troops, being fearful of Roman retribution, flatly refused to open their gates to the wayworn wanderers. This was scarcely to be wondered at, seeing that the Consul Flaminius had but a short time before defeated the Boii, the Insubres, and other Gallic tribes repeatedly, and treated the survivors with the greatest severity, taking many hostages, who were now entirely at the mercy of the Romans; and founding two Roman colonies, named respectively Placentia and Cremona, one on either bank of the river Padus or Po, right in the midst of Cis-Alpine Gaul.

As Hannibal, accompanied by Silenus and by all his principal officers, marched round and made a thorough inspection of the camp a day or two after arriving in the Italian plains, it must be owned that even he himself felt utterly discouraged. For wherever he looked, whether at man or beast, he saw nothing but misery and starvation. thirty-seven elephants with which he had started were already considerably diminished in number, many having fallen down the Alpine precipices, and the remainder were now but gaunt mountains of skin and bone. The horses tethered in rows showed distinctly every rib in their carcases, and hung down their heads with fatigue while patient misery was expressed in their lack-lustre eves. Among the men, not the slightest element of discipline had been relaxed; but, as they stood in their ranks before their tents for the inspection of their Commander-in-chief, looking like phantoms of their former selves. utter dejection could clearly be read in every countenance. Except for the want of a little food they were in hard enough condition, but there was not sufficient food to be obtained by fair means, and the men did not look either strong enough or in good enough spirits to obtain it by force of arms. That, however, was what Hannibal intended that they should do.

and he took, therefore, very good care neither to show by his face the disappointment which he felt at their miserable plight, nor the fact that he had received alarming news, which, had it been known publicly, would have made the men more disheartened still.

Instead of doing anything likely to keep the troops in a despondent state, he spoke, as he went along the ranks, words of commendation and encouragement to all. He praised their valour, told them that their names would live in history, informed them that he had received ambassadors with promises of assistance from the Boii, and generally tried to cheer their waning hopes. After this, he held before the army some gladiatorial contests among the young Gallic captives, whose condition was so miserable from the ill-treatment and blows they had received in crossing the Alps, that the army would have pitied the survivors even more than the slain had not their Commander rewarded the conquerors liberally with horses, cloaks, and suits of armour.

After these contests he addressed the army. He pointed out to them that their own condition was similar to that of the captive Gauls whom they had just seen fighting, and that, if they maintained a stout heart, either victory and great rewards would be theirs, or a death nobly won on the field of battle; but that if flight were attempted it must be useless. For how, Hannibal urged, would any attempt at flight be successful back over those terrible mountains and all through the country of Gallia to Spain? Therefore, since any attempt at flight would be useless, a stout heart, a stout arm, and a determination to conquer were all that were needful, and victory and numerous spoils would most assuredly be theirs.

Having cheered all the men with these words, and being ably seconded by the superior officers, who were themselves once more fired with his enthusiasm, the Commander, on the following few days, attacked with fury Turin and the other Gallic towns that had withstood him, and speedily carried them by assault. And after this provisions were plentiful, everything was more cheerful in camp, and thousands of Gauls, both

Insubrians and Boii, commenced to come in daily, and attach themselves to the Carthaginian standard.

Before, therefore, Hannibal thought it necessary to inform his officers and the army of the news that he had received, he found himself in an entirely different position in which to meet the Romans from that in which he had been a week previously.

And he was indeed about to meet the Romans, and that very shortly, for his news was that Scipio had rapidly returned by sea from Marseilles to Italy, and was already nigh at hand.

"Hast thou heard the news, Maharbal?" quoth Chœras, early one morning, bursting into the tent that they occupied in common, and flinging down his sword and shield, "hast thou heard the news? It seemeth that Publius Scipio hath returned from Massilia, and landed with a small force at some place in Etruria. Moreover, he hath, while travelling northward, crossed the mountain range called the Apennines, traversed the country of the Boii, and is at this moment at the new Roman city or colony called Placentia, on the other side of the Padus. Scipio is not, in fact, very many stadia from the place where we now are ourselves, since this river Ticinus whereon we are encamped floweth into the Padus, as thou knowest, not very far above Placentia."

Maharbal was resting where he had been sleeping on a couch of wolf skins on the floor of the tent. As he rose to a sitting posture, he looked a very different man to what he had been at the time of the cavalry fight on the banks of the Rhone—so gaunt was he and drawn, that the muscles of his neck and biceps stood out now like wires of steel, for there was no flesh to conceal them. He had been dreaming a dream of love, with Elissa as its heroine, and was angry at being disturbed. He laughed aloud scornfully.

"Wilt thou never have done with thy foolish jesting, Chœras? But this is indeed a sorry jest of thine. Publius Cornelius Scipio already at Placentia! Why, 'tis not yet a month since I bore off his young cub of a son almost into our lines at the camp upon the Rhodanus. Nay, nay, my merry-hearted lieutenant, I may know more of horses than geography, more

of dealing death than determining distances, but this is just a little too much. If this were all the cause thou hadst to disturb me, I would that thou had left me to sleep, for I am in sooth sorely fatigued after pursuing and cutting down the last force of those dogs of Taurini the whole of yesterday."

The young Colossus sank back upon his couch, and would have slept again if his comrade had but allowed him.

"A sorry jest! I would it were but a sorry jest," returned Chœras; "but, by the head of Hannibal, it is unfortunately no jest, but true. I had it from Hannibal himself. It seems that the Chief, and Silenus also, hath known the matter for these several days past, but it was purposely kept secret until after we had conquered the Taurini, which conquest hath now raised the hearts of our men, and induced also many of the Gauls to rally around us. It appeareth that Scipio at first followed us, but finding we had crossed the Rhone, after returning to Massilia himself, he sent his brother, Cnœus Scipio, with most of the Roman army on into Spain to fight with Hasdrubal; then he came to Pisa by ship, with very few men, but at Placentia there are, unfortunately for us, a Roman legion or two which were assembled to hold the Gauls in check during the late Gallic rising; there are also a large number of Gallic cavalry in the Roman pay. In addition to all this about Scipio, the General hath imparted to us other weighty news. It appears that the other Roman consul, Tiberius Sempronius, hath been recalled from Sicily, where he was about to make a descent upon Carthage itself, after having defeated a Punic fleet off Lilybæum, and alas! captured Malta. He is now, so Hannibal informs us, at a place on the Adriatic coast called Ariminum, and is encamped there with a very large force. Hannibal is anxious, if possible, to prevent a junction of the two forces."

"Then this is no place for me!" cried Maharbal, springing to his feet, and hastily buckling on his armour; "there can be no rest for the weary with such tidings as these." And he picked up his sword and buckler and strode off to the General's tent, after first directing Chœras to go round to the cavalry lines, and to see that all the horses were instantly properly

groomed and fed, and that all the men remained in camp. For he expected more work shortly, though he did not know how soon it might be.

Hannibal was sitting at the door of his tent studying a map which the worthy Sosilus was explaining. He rose as Maharbal approached, and welcomed him warmly. He knew that Maharbal with a portion of his force had only returned very late in the night from the prolonged and bloody pursuit of the Taurini. Chœras, who had been left in camp, had borne him a verbal report sent by Maharbal to that effect and delivered upon Hannibal's awakening. But he had not seen his well-beloved Numidian leader since his return, and therefore questioned him anxiously.

"And so, Maharbal, my lad, thou hast, it seems, entirely disposed of the last of the Taurini. Hast made many prisoners?"

"Nay, my lord, I made no prisoners. I deemed it wiser, since they were our enemies and evidently the friends of Rome, to kill all whom we should overtake! 'Twill also make the other and friendly Gauls all the more friendly, than had we spared those of a disaffected tribe. But some of them fought hard and 'twould, methinks, have been no easy job to make prisoners of them."

"Fought, did they? the dogs! And hadst thou any losses, Maharbal?"

"Ay, alas! I had, and far too many for a mere pursuit; they amount, unfortunately, to no less than thirty killed and wounded men, my lord Hannibal, of whom fifteen are dead. Among them was a most gallant young fellow, the ensign Proxenus. He was a Greek by birth, but came over from Libya with the last reinforcement. He will be indeed a serious loss, for he had both brains and bravery in equal proportions."

"Proxenus! is Proxenus, that likely youth, dead? Alas, I grieve to hear it, and especially that 'twere his lot to fall against such an unworthy foe as the Taurini. 'Tis sad, indeed. But so it wert not thou thyself, Maharbal, my grief is fleeting, for daily do we lose useful men, and young men, too; but they

can be replaced. Had it been thou now, ah, that would indeed have been another matter. Therefore see to it, Maharbal," the Chief continued, with a smile, "that thou let not thyself be killed for many a long day to come. For Carthage could ill dispense with thy services either at present or in the future."

Maharbal flushed and bowed at the compliment, and then Hannibal called to a slave to bring a stool, and bade him be seated. After this two Gallic chieftains, who had brought in intelligence, were called, and together Hannibal and Maharbal, aided by the learned Sosilus, worked out on the map from their information the respective positions of the various forces now in the field. When this had been accomplished, Hannibal rose, folded up the map, and dismissed Sosilus. Then turning to Maharbal he inquired the state of his men and horses, and if they would be in a fit condition to march again that same afternoon or evening if required absolutely to do so.

"March, ay, they could march, my lord, a short march, and could even fight a little at a pinch; but to fight, and fight well, against fresh troops, especially after themselves making first a long march, they would be quite unfit. It would be but throwing away uselessly the lives of both men and horses."

"And we can spare neither. Well, we must let it be until to-morrow, when both men and horses have been rested. There are some other advantages about the delay. not have so far to march as will the enemy before we meet them, and therefore our horses will be the fresher. The Gauls said that Scipio is building and hath almost completed a bridge across the Ticinus, by which to cross and attack us. with our horse can only catch his cavalry apart from his infantry and drive the attack home well in front and flanks, we will force him right back to the crossing place, and perhaps inflict considerable slaughter ere he can again pass the bridge. Meanwhile, listen to my plan for the strong cavalry reconnaissance which I intend to make to-morrow, in hopes of meeting Scipio while similarly employed. I shall personally, attended by General Monomachus, whom for the future I shall definitely appoint to the cavalry, lead the Iberian horse, which will be in the centre. Thou wilt divide thy Numidian horse into two parties, one to remain on each flank. After that thou thyself knowest what to do, as usual being guided by circumstances, which I must leave to thine own judgment to be met as required. And now, Maharbal, 'twere wise that thou shouldst retire and take the rest that thou must greatly require."

"Nay, Hannibal, I require no rest. I am quite sufficiently restored from all fatigue by the hopes of so soon meeting the Romans once more, for my heart burns with shame within my breast when I think of how I was compelled to fly before them when last we met."

"Tush, man! thou didst not fly; thy troops yielded to superior numbers, that was all, and I sent thee out not to fight that day, but to see what the enemy were about. Moreover, thou thyself didst nearly end the war, and at the very first encounter, by carrying off young Scipio. But 'twas not to be—and now, for a space, I would speak of other matters. Come within the tent; 'tis chilly without. We will take a cup of wine."

Maharbal entered with his Chief, who carefully closed the entrance of his tent, after having first summoned a slave to bring him a flagon and some wine-cups, which were filled.

CHAPTER VII.

HANNIBAL'S FIRST TRIUMPH,

"Now, Maharbal," quoth the chief, "I would talk to thee no longer as one general to another, but simply as man to man. What about my daughter Elissa? Hast thou forgotten her? Hath not perchance all this terrible fighting for the last six months knocked all the love nonsense with which thou wast imbued out of thy warlike head, or is there still left paramount therein the memory of that girl of mine? Now, wilt thou answer plainly, for I have something to propose to thee which may be of importance?"

Maharbal made no answer, but Hannibal rose, unlocked a small casket and drew out a scroll, which he perused while waiting for a reply.

"Well," he remarked, seeing that no reply came, "I would know thy mind on this matter, my friend."

"Hannibal," said Maharbal, rising in turn, and confronting his Chief, "Hannibal,"—then he paused and threw down his sword with a somewhat angry and impatient movement—" by what right dost thou talk to me of Elissa? What is it to thee if I should think of her still or no? As a warrior and my Chief I may listen to thee, ay, both must and would listen to thee; but what have women to do with me now? I am here to fight for Carthage and mine honour, ay, and for thine own honour, too, Hannibal, but nothing more."

"Honour is honour, but friendship is friendship. War is also war, and we are all for our country; but private interests, nevertheless, rule us all at times. Thou knowest this as well as I, therefore, as friend to friend, tell me now the truth, Maharbal."

"Well, the truth is this, Hannibal. When I meet a foe and he confronts me,"—Maharbal excitedly arose and seized his sword and shook it savagely—"I say to myself, 'This for Elissa.' Then I strike home. When my foe is struck down and bleeding at my feet, and the point of my weapon is at his throat, again I sometimes say to myself, 'I spare thee for the sake of Elissa,' and thus it ofttimes haps that a human life is saved. When again I charge into the battle, the one sweet name Elissa is ever on my lips. When I was day after day in those terrible passes of the Alps, and the rocks and boulders falling all around me slew so many of my friends and fellow-warriors, but one thought arose to my brain, and it was this, I care not for death itself, but will Elissa regret me? And now, Hannibal, my friend and my Chief, thou hast thine answer; I need say no morn."

* Nay," said Hannibal, "thou hast said enough; I understand thee—thou art constant. But will she be equally constant? It may be years ere thou see her again. But young is she, and springing from a very passionate stock; her mother was an Iberian woman. What wouldst thou do supposing that she proved inconstant unto thee and loved another?"

"1)0?—why, fight for Carthage still. What else could I do? Ay, and scorn her, too, if inconstant; nought else could be done than that."

"Well, listen, I have something to propose. Thou seest this serall. Tis a letter to my daughter Elissa. To-morrow we may have a fight, not with these Gauls alone, who have already learned to fear me, but with Scipio himself, with Roman legions at his back.

"It may be that, owing to the somewhat demoralised condition of our army. Scipio should prove victorious; it may be otherwise; yet my belief in the gods is so great, that I think I shall overthrow him. Whatever may chance, I must send my messengers with tidings back into Iberia to say that we are now safely across the Alps; to inform first my daughter Elissa at New Carthage, and then to bear intelligence unto my brother Hamirulal, in those northern parts beyond the Ebro, where, I

have learned, that Cnœus Scipio hath proceeded to attack him. Now, Maharbal, I need a trusty messenger; wilt thou be the bearer of the message? I have in the camp a chieftain of the Insubrian Gauls, who hath promised me a small fleet of ships at Genua, by which thou couldst proceed to New Carthage, where Elissa will doubtless warmly welcome thee to her loving arms. Wilt thou go? that is if thou shouldst survive tomorrow's fight. Think, my lad, after all this hardship, how sweet will be the delights of love. Moreover, now that thou hast, by thine incessant toil and valour, brought the cavalry, or rather a great part of it, over the mountains in safety, know this, I will no longer withstand thy wish. Thy nuptials with my daughter shall be recognised, and thou and Elissa shall be man and wife."

Maharbal's face flushed as he leaned forward on his seat and gazed at Hannibal with undisguised astonishment.

"My lord Hannibal, hast thou then forgotten the toast we drank to one another at Saguntum? Tis true I love Elissa more than all the world as a woman; but I love thee, mine own honour, and my country Carthage, more than any woman living, be she even thine own daughter and mine own beloved bride. Therefore must I decline to leave thy side, oh Hannibal, to seek repose in thy dearest and most beloved daughter's arms. My duty is here, and here, with all deference unto thee, I stay. Through life and death I am thine, but to do thy bidding in our country's cause. My personal longings and lovings are now things unknown. I fight for Hannibal and for Carthage; all else is forgotten, or, if not forgotten, must and shall be crushed from out my breast. And yet, the gods are my witness, I love Elissa far more than all."

Maharbal rose, and sought to leave the tent; but as he rose, Hannibal detained him by placing a hand on his shoulder.

"I admire thee, Maharbal, far more than if thou hadst acceded to my request. In truth thou hast enacted a right noble part. But should we both live, I shall not forget it, and thou thyself wilt not regret it. Should we die, I feel convinced that all the gods who, in my vision, promised me a future re-

dannibal's Daugbter.

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ward, will recognise thy virtue, and bestow a far higher reward upon thee. Ay, Melcareth shall smile and shower his blessings upon thee. Tanais shall make thee happy with such a thrilling and heavenly love as never yet mortal hath known; while the great Moloch, god of war, shall surely exalt thee to high rank in his celestial armies. Thou hast, indeed, chosen the higher and the better path. I pray the great god Melcareth, that, in my prolonged absence from her side, he inspire Elissa's heart also with devotion to her country, with constancy and virtue. But 'twill be merit great, indeed, to be worthy of a virtue so And now, let us go forth, since I must seek great as thine. some other messenger to bear her my scroll, and thou thyself canst, if thou wilt, despatch a letter by the same hand, nothing can be done before we have first once met the Romans here on Italian soil."

The rest of the day was spent in that camp by the Ticinus in preparations for the great cavalry reconnaissance, which Hannibal intended to conduct in person, on the morrow, Armour was furbished up, swords and darts were sharpened, bits and bridles were seen to. All the cavalrymen, even although the infantry suffered somewhat in consequence, were thoroughly well fed, and also supplied with a liberal allowance of wine. Olive oil was dealt out to them all, wherewith to anoint themselves and make their limbs supple, and a day's rations, to be carried on the morrow, was served out to each Scouts from a reserve body of horse, that was not to be employed in any fighting on the morrow, were sent out to watch the enemy's movements, with instructions to leave a series of detached posts at intervals, by whom, owing to there being thus relays of fresh horsemen ready, news could be swiftly conveyed to the Carthaginian Chief of Scipio's slightest movements. All these details Hannibal, not content with trusting to subordinates, saw to personally, for as he was, saving only Maharbal, the strongest man in the army, so was he also the most indefatigable. Throughout the whole of that day, therefore, he scarcely rested, but visited every part of the camp and every troop in turn, seeing that his instructions were

carried out absolutely to the letter, and speaking grand and noble words of encouragement wherever he passed.

When, therefore, after a substantial breakfast, the whole of the cavalry paraded on the following morn, it was no longer a starveling, dispirited body of men that fell beneath his gaze, but a gallant band of warriors bearing confidence in their glance, self-reliant, proud, and anxious for the fray. Well satisfied with the noble bearing of his followers, after having first ridden round the ranks and complimented his men upon their brave and soldierly appearance, Hannibal bade his trumpeter sound the advance, and himself led the way. As he put his horse in motion, the whole army burst spontaneously into a cheer—"Hannibal! Long live Hannibal."

Clad in gorgeous but serviceable armour, with dancing plumes waving from the crest of his helmet, the gallant Carthaginian General was indeed, as he marched forth that morn to meet the Romans for the first time in his career, such a leader as the world had never seen.

As the cavalry, by troops and squadrons, filed off in succession after him, silence fell among their ranks. But the infantry soldiers and also the Gauls remaining behind in camp continued the shouts of enthusiasm. "Hannibal! Long live Hannibal!" For it was for him, the General alone, and his personal influence, more than for a Carthage which was to most of them but a name, that these troops, drawn from many mixed tribes and nations, were willing and ready to lay down their lives. And it was ever so; it was Hannibal's army, not a Carthaginian army that so often defeated Rome.

Thus gallantly encouraged by the shouts of their comrades did the whole of the Carthaginian horse march off down the banks of the river Ticinus. For a considerable distance the ground was broken and rocky, and considerably wooded, and not at all suitable for the manœuvring of mounted troops. But, at length, after a march of some three hours' duration, just at the very spot which suited his purpose, Hannibal was met by the first of his scouts coming in and informing him that Scipio had started with his forces, and was now crossing the

river. They gave the further information that there was no occasion for hurry, as each relay of messengers had galloped back hard, and that the remainder of the vedettes, now retiring leisurely before the advancing foe, would give timely warning of their nearer approach.

The ground whereon the front of the column was standing when this news arrived was at the edge of an extensive copse of detached oak trees, beyond which was a large open plain of what had earlier in the year been cultivated ground. Drawing up all his forces just inside the edge, and in the shelter of the trees, in the order of battle which he intended to employ later on, the Chief now gave the order for the men to dismount to rest the animals, and to eat a portion of the rations that they had brought with them. He had a short time previously made each troop halt in turn at a convenient shallow place in the river Ticinus to give their horses a mouthful of water—therefore no possible precaution had been neglected to bring his forces fresh into battle. While halting in the shelter of the oak trees. several more groups of messengers came in from the front. From these Hannibal learned without a doubt that Scipio was advancing only with his cavalry and light-armed footmen, and that from all accounts the numbers of the former were, if anything, somewhat inferior to his own.

He was in high glee as he stood talking to a group of his officers, and rubbed his hands cheerfully.

"Melcareth hath surely delivered them unto us," he said, "for this foolish Scipio hath, by leaving his heavy-armed infantry behind, played beautifully into my hands. And thou, my bloodthirsty Monomachus, shalt soon have thy fill of slaying."

"I care nought so that I slay but Scipio himself! So that ere I perish myself, I dip my hand into the life-blood of the Roman Consul, I shall die happy."

Hannibal laughed, then gave the order to mount, but for the troops still to remain within the fringe of the covert underneath the spreading oaks.

While waiting thus, there suddenly arose a fleeting squall of

driving wind and rain, which tore the leaves with fury from the oaks, sending them whirling in all directions, while the acorns, which abounded, fell pattering and clattering in shoals upon the armour of the warriors. The men, who were superstitious, knew not how to interpret the augury; but their Chief was equal to the occasion.

"A glorious omen!" he proclaimed aloud, with a laugh: "Even as the falling of these acorns, so shall fall the hordes of the advancing enemy beneath the storm of our attack. See how the elephants are calmly picking them up, and devouring them! so shall we also devour the foe."

The word was taken up and passed round, and now the men. reassured and in high good humour, caught the falling acorns and tossed them gleefully at one another. Meanwhile, as Hannibal had said, the huge elephants calmly waiting and swinging their fore-legs, picked up one by one with their trunks all the fallen acorns within reach and ate them with apparent relish. sight of these huge painted and horrible beasts, thus picking up and eating the little acorns, was in itself so ludicrous that all those who could see the sight now roared with laughter like very children. For, as all know who have been present at a battle, during the time, be it short or long, that men are waiting anxiously for the signal that shall engage them in mortal conflict, the nerves are on edge. 'Tis then often the slightest and most trivial circumstance that will sway a whole host to tears or laughter, to reckless courage, or to shameful retreat. On this occasion the whole force was overcome with exuberance of spirits, and thus hearty and boyish laughter rippled along the ranks.

It was, in sooth, a strange sight to see these gigantic animals so peacefully enjoying themselves at such a moment with such trivial food. For to look at them they seemed more like monsters ready to devour men.

There were that day twenty-four of them present, twelve being placed at intervals on each flank. Every elephant had its head and trunk painted crimson with vermilion; the body was painted black, with white stripes on the ribs, and the legs

white to the knee and red below. To each tusk, and all were tuskers, were fastened huge two-edged swords; round the upper part of each of the fore-legs was clasped a band set with terrible and glistening spikes; and, to crown all, each elephant had round its trunk, near the lower extremity, several heavy iron rings. With these they were trained to strike. An ordinary elephant is to those with weak nerves a sufficiently appalling sight. Judge, then, what would be the effect upon those. who had never seen the beasts before, of the appearance of these awful monsters. The elephants were that day in light marching order, and therefore they carried no castles. Instead on the back of each was a light pad, on which sat, secured with ropes, and having also rope foot-rests, eight archers, four on each side, plentifully supplied with heavy arrows. upon the neck of every beast was an Indian driver, completely covered with light armour of chain mail, and carrying, in addition to the goad with which he urged his beast, a quiver full of short and heavy darts to hurl at the foe at close quarters.

The order of battle was fully formed. The heavy Spanish cavalry were in the centre; then on each side were twelve elephants; beyond them again on each flank large bodies of the Numidian horse, Maharbal commanding the right wing, and Chœras the left of the Numidians.

Presently the last of the scouts came in, saying that the Romans were now close at hand, and almost instantly their light-armed javeline men and archers appeared, swarming on the plain. In rear of them, at a short distance, could be seen the allied Gallic and Roman cavalry advancing at a slow pace in a splendid line, with small intervals between the separate troops. Hannibal allowed the light-armed men to advance well out into the plain before he stirred from the shelter of the oak trees. Thus he was well able to take stock of the Roman numbers before engaging, while they could not possibly form any idea of the numbers that he had at his own command. Speedily sending an aide-de-camp to both Maharbal and Mago with orders to remain for a short time

longer concealed in the forest, he now caused the "advance" and "the trot" to be sounded by his trumpeter. In a steady line, with himself and Monomachus at the head of the centre, the Iberian cavalry instantly emerged from their shelter. the huge elephants lumbering along with ungainly tread at an equal pace on each flank, and by command of their drivers, raising their trunks on high and loudly trumpeting as they advanced. The sudden appearance of this hitherto unseen army of cavalry, coupled with the awesome sight of these terrible and frightful creatures, at once struck terror into the heart of the light-armed Roman troops. Seeing that certain death awaited them if they remained, they instantly broke and fled, retreating through the intervals between the troops of cavalry, and re-forming into companies in rear. Scipio himself, whose presence was denoted by a standard surmounted with the Roman eagle, was with the main body. He had previously exhorted them: saying that the Carthaginians were but curs with their tails between their legs, who had fled before his cavalry on the banks of the Rhone, and they believed him. Hence there was no flinching in the ranks.

Hannibal now ordered his trumpeter to sound "the gallop," and in a second, with thundering footfall, the whole of his heavy cavalry, armed with both spears and swords, the latter being attached to the saddle, advanced with the speed of lightning.

Scipio also sounded "the charge," but the retreat of his light-armed footmen had somewhat delayed him. Therefore, when the two forces met in shock of battle, the greater impetus being with the Carthaginians, the Romans were at first borne backwards, hundreds of men and horses being cast to the ground at the very first dreadful onslaught. It was a terrible and an awful sight, that fearful rush and the meeting between the two cavalry forces. And now it was every man for himself, and both sides were equally determined. The Romans, at first borne back, soon rallied; spears on both sides were cast away as the horses fell in hundreds, and, foot to foot and hand

to hand, the whole plain was soon one seething and struggling mass of murdering humanity. Now, however, the elephants came in upon each flank of the Romans. Charging down, striking with their trunks, destroying with their horrible scythelike swords, frequently kneeling upon and crushing their opponents, they carried all before them on the flanks. time, the archers on their backs discharged from close quarters the heavy-headed arrows from their bows. The effect of this charge on the flanks, however, was but to consolidate the Roman centre. Gallantly the Romans fought, never vielding a foot, and many were the Iberians who fell before their dreadful valour never to rise again. In the midst of all, mounted on a splendid bay charger, was Publius Scipio. Separated from him at but a short distance was Hannibal, above whom, borne by his ensign, waved the flag of Carthage, the white horse upon a purple ground. The two Generals could. for a while, plainly see each other, and, each grinding his teeth and shaking his fist with rage at the other, they tried to come to mortal combat. But it was in vain; the struggling, thrusting, killing throng of men, swaying first this way and then that, swept them apart, and in a short time the rush of battle had severed them completely. Each had now to defend himself, and they saw one another no more. At length the tide of battle seemed going to the Romans. The Carthaginians slowly but gradually began to give ground. A few of those in rear of the centre began to retire. The wounded were pouring back in streams; riderless horses, many of them with their entrails hanging out, were, while shrieking with agony as only a horse can, wildly careering about the plain.

And now came the opportunity for which the young warrior Maharbal had been waiting, and he took it. For fully an hour he had, from his shelter in the oak wood, been watching the ebb and flow of the battle, and terrible had been his anxiety and great his impatience. But he had in himself the makings of a great general, and he wisely refrained from interfering too

soon. He sent a messenger to summon Chæras to him, and imparted certain instructions before sending him back to his own wing.

"Now, Chœras," he said, "notice this and no jesting! Keep thou all thy men carefully concealed until thou shalt see me issue alone from the wood with this scarf waving on my sword. Then if I raise it slowly and wave it once downwards, gallop with thy party and attack the enemy's right flank. If I raise it again slowly and wave it downwards twice, do thou, avoiding the enemy's flank, sweep completely round and attack the rear. Never mind what mine own movements may be, thou hast but to obey mine orders. Of one thing be careful, that is, if I wave twice to slay all those footmen who retreated through the enemy's ranks before thou makest any attack upon the cavalry from the rear. For they are Romans—the cavalry are chiefly Gauls, and I will dispose of them myself. But do thou be careful to despatch the footmen first; dost thou understand?"

"Ay, ay, Maharbal, I understand full well; but may I not start now? The clash and conflict of the battle are getting too much for me; I cannot, I fear, control either my feelings or my men much longer; I long to be at them. I can only express my feelings in verse.

"A poet I, yet thirst for blood,
For Roman blood I call!
And I would storm as mountain flood,
E'en though as flood I fall.

"There, would that not do for Sosilus? He would be delighted to parse, dissect, and destroy that little verse of mine, if he were only here. But, by Melcareth, Maharbal! versifying apart, do let me get at them soon; I can hardly keep my seat upon my horse for impatience."

"Well spoken, my gallant poet," replied Maharbal, smiling; "thou shalt, I wager, soon have plenty of mountaineering work to do in climbing over the bodies of the slain, so be not impatient. But one word. In attacking, look thou well to

thy guard—you poets are so incautious. After striking, ever raise thy wrist and cover thyself again before another blow. Now farewell, and the gods be with thee; return to thy troops."

Very shortly after these orders had been given, Maharbal issued from the wood and waved his sword with the attached handkerchief twice. Like arrows Chœras and his men started from their cover, and sweeping over the plain, avoiding the flanks, fell upon the rear of the Romans. Dreadful then was the slaughter of the footmen who had retired behind the Roman cavalry. At the same instant Maharbal swept round the other flank, and, leaving the footmen alone, fell with his men upon the rear of the Roman cavalry. The whole aspect of the battle was changed in a moment. The whole Roman force, with the exception of a band that rallied around Scipio. broke and fled, and the greater part of the Carthaginian horse pursued them. Maharbal, however, charged the serried foes around the Roman leader, and with his terrible blows had soon cut a lane right through their ranks up to the Commander himself, slaving the standard-bearer and seizing the standard. Vainly did Scipio raise his already tired arm to ward off the fearful blow that Maharbal now dealt. He struck at the Consul with all his force, but his sword, glancing off the Consul's helmet, clove his shoulder. It cut clean through his armour and half-severed his right arm. The shock threw Scipio from the saddle, and his attendants now fled to a man. Maharbal was about to dismount, and secure the person of the Consul as his prisoner, when suddenly Monomachus burst upon the scene, wounded and dismounted, brandishing a bared dagger which he stooped to strike into the prostrate Roman's throat. But first he plunged his hand in the Roman's blood.

"Hold! hold, Monomachus!" cried Maharbal. "Slay him not, he is the General and a noble foe, and he is moreover my prisoner. Thou shalt not slay him!"

"Curse thee!" cried the slaughterer furiously, "I tell thee I will slay him, ay, and thee too if thou interfere," and he knelt over the body of Scipio to despatch him, At that moment there came a shock. A young Roman officer with five or six followers charged in upon the scene. With one spear-thrust the leader transfixed the neck of the bloody Monomachus, and then he instantly turned upon Maharbal.

"Ha! we meet again," he cried, and rushed upon him. It was young Scipio! But he was no match for Maharbal, who easily avoided the spear-thrust, and then with a scornful laugh charged him in turn. Striking him merely with his fist, he knocked him off his saddle.

"Ay, once again we meet and once again I spare thee, Roman!" he cried, "and again I spare thee simply for thy valour's sake."

Then seeing himself surrounded by Romans, he struck down a couple of them, and pressing his horse out of the throng, escaped, bearing the Roman eagle with him.

CHAPTER VIII.

EUGENIA.

What a glorious career of successes it was that was inaugurated with this cavalry victory near the Ticinus! Had not the blood-thirsty monster Monomachus been slain by young Scipio at the very end of the action, he might not only have been able to gratify his wish of plunging his arm into the blood—although it proved not indeed the life-blood—of the Roman General, but he might have bathed repeatedly during the next twelve months in rivers of blood. Success followed on success. Like rats that leave a sinking ship, the Gauls in the Roman army deserted in their thousands and joined Hannibal; the Boil and other Cis-Alpine tribes first sent him ambassadors and hostages, and then themselves came over with all their fighting men, and, after the battle of the Trebia, the whole of Cis-Alpine Gaul was in the hands of the invading Carthaginians.

Now the battle of the Trebia was in this wise. After the cavalry action just described, the wounded consul Publius Scipio fled with his army first across the Po, and then, after considerable losses at the crossings of all the rivers, to some high ground near the River Trebia, where the now-dreaded Numidian Cavalry were unable to get at him. Here he was joined in his camp by the other consul, Tiberius Sempronius, who brought his army from Ariminum, the combined Roman forces amounting to over forty thousand men. The two consuls were utterly unable to decide upon a concerted plan of action; the wounded General wishing for time to get well, and to accustom his newly-raised legions to campaigning for a while before risking a general action. Tiberius, however, was anxious to gain some military glory for himself, apart from his

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brother consul; he was, moreover, jealous of the possible successes of the succeeding consuls, the time for whose election was near at hand. He was therefore only too anxious to risk a combat, and was constantly urging Scipio to allow him to take the combined consular forces against Hannibal.

But now mention must be made of the youthful Eugenia and her amours with Mago.

Mago, the younger brother of Hannibal, was immediately, on the death of Hannibal Monomachus, appointed to the supreme command of all the Carthaginian cavalry. After the affair of the Ticinus, he was ordered on to the pursuit, and he ceased not to harass Scipio, even when he had encamped under the walls of the city of Placentia. Here, one day in a bold foray, he destroyed a portion of the camp outside the town, and in the tent of one of the generals of the Roman allies, which he looted, he captured an Italian maiden named Eugenia, a girl about twenty years of age, and of surpassing beauty. She was by birth an Etruscan, and by some is reported to have been the daughter, by others the niece, of the general in whose tent she had been found.

Terrified at first, she was soon fascinated by the charm of Mago, who was a young man of most handsome appearance. and who loaded her with gifts and gold, which were liberally supplied by Hannibal for a purpose. After a very few days, as Mago was well acquainted with the Latin tongue, he had so completely won her to him that she would have readily allowed herself to be burned with fire for his sake, or, at least, to have given her life for his. Not being a Roman, but an Etruscan, she had no particular love for Rome; but youthful and ardent, and anxious to prove to Mago her great love for him, she readily fell in with his wishes. Accordingly, after Scipio had encamped upon the heights on a spur of the Apennines, she one day, being aided by Mago, pretended to escape to the Roman camp, where she arrived with torn raiment, dishevelled hair, and an appearance of the greatest misery. Her curses and invectives against the Carthaginians, and the story which she related of her imaginary wrongs, utterly and at once

disarmed all suspicion. The fair maid Eugenia was therefore received with open arms and made a most welcome guest in the Roman camp, where everyone pitied her for the terrible misfortunes she had endured. Thus, there was nothing that transpired there that she did not know, and when she had found out all that was going on, she one night took an opportunity of escaping, and rejoined her lover Mago. To him she revealed everything, and Hannibal was at once put in possession of all the information he required. Having thus gained knowledge of all the cabals that were going on in the Roman headquarters, Hannibal knew how to act, and determined to precipitate a conflict before the Roman infantry were really sufficiently seasoned.

This he easily managed.

To Mago, through whose pretty lover he had gained so much useful information, he assigned the most arduous post—that of hiding by night in ambush in a wet water-course, with a party of two thousand chosen horse and foot, to appear at a seasonable moment.

Then early in the morning, after his own men had breakfasted by the camp fires, a party of light-armed troops were sent out to draw out the Romans from their camp, which was easily accomplished, the Romans, under Sempronius himself. thronging out, all unsed as they were, and pursuing the apparently flying foe across the swollen River Trebia. What followed is but history. After a bloody and prolonged fight Mago and his hidden troops suddenly appeared from the water-course in rear of the Romans, and a frightful slaughter ensued, the Numidians under Maharbal and Chœras charging, as usual, in small groups, and advancing and retiring, utterly disconcerting the enemy. The result of this terrible battle. which was fought in a fearful snow-storm, was that out of forty thousand troops engaged, only ten thousand survived and escaped to Placentia. But the savage elephants, despite the snow, pursued and slaughtered for hours and hours, until they could slay no more. And this was the last fight in which the elephants were of any avail, for the bitter cold weather which now

set in soon killed them all but one, and killed also thousands of the allied Carthaginians. As, however, during the battle, the greatest losses among the Carthaginians had taken place among the Celts or Gauls, Hannibal still retained a large number of his original army of Libyans and Iberians with whom to continue the campaign.

After this battle in the early spring, there were some terrible times, during which, over and over again, it must be confessed, Maharbal longed, but longed in vain, that he had taken the opportunity offered him by the Chief of returning to New Carthage with the letter to his beloved Elissa.

But there was no going back now, and, as he had cast in his lot with his wonderful Chief, so was he compelled to go on. Therefore, in the early spring, he crossed the Apennines, and for four consecutive days and nights marched through the horrible swamps and morasses between Lucca and Fæsulæ, where the only dry places to be found at nights was upon the bodies of the dead baggage animals. Here daily and nightly he strove to minister to Hannibal, who, sorely afflicted with a terrible attack of ophthalmia, which cost him an eye, nevertheless concealed his own agony, and daily and hourly, riding upon the sole elephant that survived, encouraged by his presence and example the troops under his command.

Then came a short period of rest at Fæsulæ, during which the Carthaginian troops contrived to regain a little of their lost vigour; but, as many of the horses had lost their hoofs in the awful march through the swamps, it fell to Maharbal and Mago, during this period, to continually make sudden excursions where least expected, and seize upon all the horses they could find.

It was now that Eugenia, the mistress of Mago, became most useful. Carefully nurtured by Mago, and being accorded by Hannibal all the comforts possible during this terrible march, she had not only survived all its terrors, but was as strong and well, and, moreover, as beautiful at its termination as she had been at its commencement.

She had, for concealment and convenience, been disguised

as a boy, and did not look while attired in male raiment more than about fourteen years of age. She was strong and hardy. and being herself an Etruscan, was well able to give every kind of information about that country of Etruria wherein they now She was, however, no longer entirely devoted to Mago. and this for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the strongest of all was that she was a woman, and consequently unable to continue Therefore, although she had deliberately ever in one mind. given herself to Mago, under no compulsion, but merely for love's sake, she now had, so she discovered, some religious scruples about her conduct. She talked to Mago of the possible anger of the gods; at times, also, she became cold to him, and reproached him with the sacrifices she had made for his sake in leaving the Romans to wander about with him.

Mago for a time put up with these whims and vagaries, for he had truly learned to love Eugenia; but there was one reason, at present unexpressed, which daily made her more dissatisfied and discontented.

Mago at length resented this treatment, as he wearied of her ill-merited complaints. He now became, or at any rate pretended to be, neglectful and cold in turn, and appeared to be entirely devoted to a recently-captured slave girl.

Eugenia had, in reality, recently set her affections upon Maharbal, and, as the days advanced, she fell madly in love with him. Accordingly, during the rides through the districts of Etruria in search of horses, Eugenia, now that Mago neglected her, attached herself daily to the party led by Maharbal, and trying, indeed, did the young warrior find these rides. For, faithful himself to Elissa, and quite as faithful to his friend Mago, he was, nevertheless, violently moved by the passion in spired by the beautiful Eugenia; and at length, so overcome was he by her charms, her sweetness, and her very evident admiration and love for himself, that he felt he must fall, and yet he would not fall.

A crisis came. One day, when far away upon one of these raiding expeditions, they had encamped for the mid-day meal in a wood, and Eugenia, on some pretext, persuaded Maharbal

to wander with her through the most shady parts of the grove. Then suddenly losing all reserve, she fell with tears upon his neck, and declared that she loved him. Maharbal was, for a moment, overcome by the passion with which he thrilled at the contact with her, and, for a fleeting second, pressed her violently to his heart. But then, with a virtue almost unknown in those times, he remembered his faith to his lover—his almost wife—Elissa, and his faith to his friend—almost brother—Mago, and a feeling of fury rose within him. He loosed the girl's arms from his neck with an angry movement.

"May the gods forgive me!" he cried, "but I know not what to do. I desire thee intensely, thou beautiful Eugenia, and, indeed, I almost love thee. But thou art not yet mine, and shalt never be mine, for I will not be false as thou art thyself. And I should be doubly false should I yield. Therefore, for thine own honour and mine own, thou must die!"

Swiftly he drew his dagger, and, in spite of her one appealing cry, slew her there on the spot, striking his dagger into her warm young breast. Then covering his eyes with his hands, he hurried from the dreadful place, horrified at what he had done, and yet feeling that the omnipotent gods alone had guided the hand that struck the fatal blow. And this, then, was the tragic end of poor Eugenia, who knew not, when she had won a man's love and given unto him all the most precious gift of woman, how to remain faithful.

Maharbal was not the man to conceal an occurrence of this sort. Upon his return to camp, he straightway repaired to Hannibal's tent, and begged for Mago to be summoned. After relating exactly what had occurred, he bared his breast, and, presenting the hilt of his own sword to Mago, said:

"Strike, Mago! for I have taken a life that should be dear to thee. Strike! for I feel myself indeed worthy of death for having sent that fresh young soul to Hades. But the gods are my judges, and if thou wilt but strike, I shall soon appear before them to answer for my conduct. Therefore, I say strike, and strike home!"

Mago did not strike. He burst into tears, and threw himself into Maharbal's arms.

"It is mine own fault," he cried, "oh Maharbal, and deeply do I grieve for the poor girl Eugenia. But far more deeply, friend, do I grieve for thee, upon whom the gods have laid such a cruel burden, as to compel thee, for thine honour's sake and mine, to slay a woman. For thou hadst no other alternative, save to become a base villain."

And again he wept, and Hannibal, who had in a fatherly way himself loved the young maiden, being moved beyond words, silently joined his brother and Maharbal in their tears.

There was much sadness that night in the camp of the generals, and if virtue be, as the proverb saith, its own reward, then, for the unhappy Maharbal, that reward was nought but misery.

After this, Maharbal became gloomy and morose. lost the youthful gaiety which had so often borne him up, and with which he had in evil days encouraged others. For this affair preved upon his mind. In his dreams he would see the dead girl, by turns stretching out her arms to him in imploring love, and then in imploring despair as he was about to strike the fatal blow. He refused his food; indeed, he was quite unable to eat. It was soon evident to all who knew him that his mind was preying on his body, for daily he looked more wan and ill, but he could not be comforted despite the efforts of his friends to cheer him. It was in vain that the worthy and kind-hearted Sosilus related for his benefit various real or imaginary histories, all given with due chapter and verse, of some of the god-like heroes of old, who, in similar cases, had behaved exactly like unto Maharbal himself; these well-meant histories afforded him no comfort whatever. He listened in silence. In vain also did Chœras force himself to the most sprightly jests, or write the most comic and witty verses, and read them to him aloud.

From sheer politeness' sake Maharbal would force a smile, and compliment his friend, but immediately afterwards would relapse into moody silence as before.

Hannibal and Mago soon became quite alarmed, fearing that his mind was becoming unhinged by his grief. But although they were as brothers to him, and showered on him their brotherly love, nought that they could do was of any avail. For Maharbal was haunted day and night by the spirit of Eugenia. Throughout all his career, although many women, in fact nearly all the women whom he met, as Melania once wrote to Hannibal, fell in love with him, this secret and powerful attraction which he had experienced for the lovely Eugenia was the only passion for any other, save Elissa, that ever came to torture Maharbal. But he kept his thoughts to himself and suffered in silence, although ever haunted by the phantom of the slaughtered girl.

Had it not been that the battle of Lake Thrasymene occurred just about this time to divert the current of his thoughts, there is not the slightest doubt but that Maharbal would shortly have died a raving maniac. But Melcareth was merciful, and, by means of the distraction of active warfare, withdrew the heavy hand which he had laid upon the young man to try him; so that after the battle of Lake Thrasymene Maharbal gradually, to the delight of his comrades, recovered his health and spirits once more.

CHAPTER IX.

THRASYMENE.

THE two new Consuls that year were Cnœus Servilius and Flaminius, and they had between them some sixty thousand troops. By so unexpectedly crossing the Apennines, and marching through the awful marshes of the overflowed Arno, Hannibal had entirely evaded Cnœus Servilius, who was left at Ariminum on the Adriatic, but he now found Flaminius in Etruria, blocking the way to Rome with a large force at a place called Arretium. Accordingly, Hannibal, while still collecting horses and resting his troops, held one day a council of war to consider the situation.

There were present, Mago, General Hanno, Maharbal, Hasdrubal the pioneer, who had succeeded Monomachus as head of the engineering department, Silenus the scribe, with writing materials handy, and last, but by no means least upon this occasion. Sosilus, who had, by this time, entirely undertaken the duties of head of the intelligence department of the army. which were duties in which he excelled. He had recently organised an excellent system of spies on a large scale, and the scheme was working admirably. Nothing took place in the Roman camp, or, for that matter, in Rome itself, without his being informed; and of all occurrences of interest, Sosilus made voluminous notes under alphabetical headings, with a view both to present utility and to incorporation in his future history of the war. Choeras returned from a horse-raiding expedition just as the proceedings were commencing. He was not entitled by his rank in the army to be present at a council of war, but Hannibal, who was very partial to him on account of his ready humour, called him in as he saw him marching.

with a band of captured horses, past the open door of the council tent. Hannibal was still suffering agonies from the attack of ophthalmia, which had already cost him one eye. Nevertheless, with his usual indomitable courage, as he sat at the head of the council table, with a silk bandage over the diseased eye, he looked as unconcerned and jovial as possible. No one could, for a moment, have imagined that he was actually suffering dreadful pain. Such was the man, that he was even able to jest at his own condition.

"Well, most worthy Sosilus, thou seest in me now a hitherto unknown species—a one-eyed General—therefore, thou, as head of the intelligence department, wilt have to be in future not only 'the ears of the army,' but the unlucky General's missing eye as well. Ah, well, what the gods have decreed is just, and I doubt not but that with thine aid my one remaining eye will be good enough to show me the way to Rome.

"But now to business. What canst thou tell me about the Consul Flaminius now at Arretium? I wish to have details as to his personal character and his history, as well as the numbers of his troops at present; for it is often from knowing the previous career and characteristics of one's foe that one knows best how to combat him."

"Most rightly said, my lord Hannibal," replied Sosilus, while fumbling over his very voluminous notes. "I see that thou art of the same mind as the cunning Ulysses, who, according to Homer, upon a very similar occasion at the siege of Troy—but here is Flaminius; that matter of Ulysses can rest till later on, when, if any here present hath an hour or so to spare, I will with pleasure relate it."

Unseen as he thought, but in reality observed by the scribe, Chœras made a grimace at Hannibal expressive of delight at escaping the history of Ulysses, at which the General smiled sympathetically in return. But now, in a business-like manner, Sosilus read aloud, as though from a dictionary:

"Flaminius-Caius, now Consul for the second time, is of plebeian origin and much hated by the patricians on account of his ever supporting the plebeian interests. Hath now with

him at Arretium, 30,000 troops of Romans and the allies combined, of whom 6,000 are cavalry. Was tribune ten years ago, and, against the advice and wishes of the Senate, passed a law, called the Flaminia lex, for the division of the lands of the conquered Senones, a Gallic tribe in Umbria, among the poorer Roman citizens. Is founder of the great Circus called the Circus Flaminius, and likewise builder of the great military road from Rome to Aquilæa and Ariminum, known as the via Flaminia or Flaminian way.

"Six years ago, when Consul for the first time, crossed the River Padus—the first Roman ever to do so—and made war upon the Insubrian Gauls, who still detest his memory. On that occasion the hostile Senate declared that the gods had shown prodigies and omens against his success, and ordered him by letter to return. But he left the letter unopened until he had first crossed the Po and defeated the Gauls. On account of that success he is more hated than ever by the patrician class, who have lately seen more prodigies upon the occasion of his recent re-election by the people to the Consulate. Their object is evidently to represent him to the people as an unlucky man, or one unblessed by the gods.

"Some of the portents that have been seen are as follows:

- "An ox in the cattle market ran into a house, rushed upstairs, and threw itself out of a third storey window.
- "A four months' old baby in the vegetable market, loudly shouted 'Triumph!'
 - "A cat gave birth to twenty-four kittens in the Forum.
 - "Showers of stones fell in various parts of the city.
 - "The statues of the gods perspired freely.
- "A mouse squeaked during the election, which the Senate therefore sought to cancel."

This last of the list of portents against the unlucky Flaminius was too much for the gravity of Chœras, who burst out laughing loudly.

"Lucky for that mouse," he exclaimed, "that he did not squeak in the Forum near the mother of the twenty-four catlings; he would soon then have understood the meaning of

portents better than apparently doth this thick-headed Flaminius."

There was general merriment at this sally, when Hannibal remarked:

"Yea, thou hast said the right word, Chœras. Thick-headed he evidently is, that is plainly his character if he can thus resist the Senate and the patricians with their portents, and calmly go on his own way despite all their evil omens. Many thanks unto thee, Sosilus, for thine excellent information. From it, I now judge this Flaminius to be a headstrong man, and one somewhat over self-reliant. Thus I think it highly probable that we shall be able to draw him into a pitched battle without his waiting for the other consular army to come and join him. At any rate we will try. This is my plan.

"Methinks, if we now start to the southward, ravaging and burning as we go, and pass him by, he will soon be drawn after us, and in rage at seeing the blazing and devastated country, will rush headlong to his doom. For we will select such ground as may be favourable to ourselves for fighting upon, and then, methinks, most worthy Chœras," he turned to the wag, "that the thick-headed general, when pitched against the one-eyed general, will soon find out to his cost that the mouse did not squeak for nothing."

"Ay, it will probably rain bullocks and babies about that period!" retorted Chæras, "a very good omen for Carthage whenever that happens!"

At this remark even the unhappy Maharbal grimly smiled. Then the meeting broke up, Chæras repeating a verse aloud to Sosilus as they rose to go.

"With bullocks raining over head,
While babies strew the soil;
No matter then how thick his head,
'Twill squash like olive oil.

"There! learned man! I make thee a present of that verse for thy history of the war, which contains, I fear me, far too much of bald prose. A verse or two of such singular merit will

far increase the value of thy work. Therefore take it gratis; 'tis a present, I say."

"With many thanks, I gladly accept the gift," replied the sage with a merry twinkle in his eye. "And now I in return will make thee also a present, oh Chœras, and one which will greatly increase the value of thy brains, no less a present, indeed, than the relation of that story about Ulysses that I began just now. It will not take me much more than an hour and a half to give it thee from end to end, with all the references."

"Oh, but I have business with the horses," exclaimed Cheeras, with a look of horror, and gathering up his sword and buckler, he made for the door of the tent. But the sage was not to be defrauded of his revenge this time. He seized the escaping poet by his armour cuirass at the back of the neck, and held him firmly.

"I too will come and see the horses, and can tell thee the history as we go; but of one thing be assured. I leave thee not until thou hast heard it all—ay, until the very last word. Thinkest thou that I am so mean as to accept a valuable present from thee for nothing? Nay, indeed, on the contrary. For as Achilles, when disguised as a woman at the Court of Lycomedes, remarked one day to the fair Deidamia—"

What Achilles said to Deidamia none of the laughing onlookers present ever knew, for at this moment the struggling Chæras broke out of the tent, the pedant, who was a small man, still clinging to the back of his neck with all the tenacity of a weasel clinging to a rabbit. He was determined to be fairly revenged upon the poet at last, and he had got his opportunity, and did not intend to relinquish his victim!

Next day the Carthaginian army commenced to march southward through Etruria, and, just as in Hannibal's dream, the monster of the devastation of Italy followed in their wake. Every person they met was slaughtered, every building put to the flames.

Making a detour, Flaminius and his army were avoided, but the Roman Consul was soon aware of his adversary's passage from the thick clouds of smoke with which the whole

countryside was filled. Furious at this, he, as Hannibal had anticipated, without waiting for any aid to come to him from Ariminum, hurried blindly in pursuit. And Hannibal, laughing in his sleeve, quietly lay in wait for him in the mountain passes by the northern shores of Lake Thrasymene.

Never in the course of history has there been such an example of a complete surprise of the whole of a large army as at this battle. For over-night, aided by the configuration of the ground, which was admirably adapted to his purpose, the Carthaginian general arranged his various forces in ambush in several places, by the side of the lake and the pass leading to the valley through which the Roman force had to march in their fancied pursuit. Behind the hill on one side, near the entrance to the pass, were hidden all the Balearic slingers and the light-armed troops. On the other side, facing them, were the Numidian cavalry and the Gallic infantry; while upon a steep hill, which almost entirely closed the end of the valley, only leaving, indeed, a very narrow and precipitous roadway near the lake, stood Hannibal himself, with the whole of the Spanish and Libyan heavy infantry.

At early dawn, when a thick mist enveloped everything down to the water's edge, Flaminius and his army, like flies into a trap, plunged recklessly into the pass and the valley, which were so soon to be whitened with their bones. The Carthaginians on the heights could plainly hear through the mist the tramp of the 30,000 enemies marching below them.

In the meantime, concealed by the mist, they gradually, in their impatience, edged further and further towards the slopes, down which they but awaited the command to charge. They could plainly—the white heavy mist having now settled upon the lower ground—see their own comrades similarly preparing on every surrounding hill-top.

When Hannibal, who was himself waiting in a fever of expectation, judged by the ear that the head of the Roman columns had reached the foot of the hill whereon he stood, he gave in a loud tone the order to charge. According to preconceived arrangement, the cry was instantly taken up and

repeated by every general, captain, prefect, tribune, or other officer of any and every kind stationed around the amphitheatre of hills. In a second, the whole army was in motion, and then with a roar like thunder, from the combined frantic shouting, the clattering of the rocks and the clanging of the armour, thousands of men poured down on every side at once to charge the unseen and unsuspecting foe below. Never. indeed, in the history of the world has there been planned and executed such a terrible surprise! The Romans had, many of them, not even time to draw their swords, but were slain where In three hours' time the whole of the Roman they stood. army, with the exception of six thousand men of the van. who. in the mist, managed to force their way through to a hillock. where they stood bewildered, were cut down, or driven into the lake. Here, while standing up to their necks in the water. they were charged by the Carthaginian cavalry, who despatched them with their spears, the Consul Flaminius himself being one of the killed.

When at length the mist cleared, and the six thousand Romans who had taken refuge on the hill saw the awful scene of carnage below, they retreated to a neighbouring Etruscan village. But Hannibal, thinking that in his present unhappy condition of mind the more fighting that Maharbal could get the better it would be for him, sent him the next day with all the light-armed troops and the Iberians to besiege the village, which he did so successfully that the whole of the six thousand surrendered to him on his promising to them their lives. Altogether, the appalling number of fifteen thousand Romans were actually slain in this battle, and, including the six thousand who surrendered to Maharbal, fifteen thousand were taken prisoners, more than half of whom were wounded. Hannibal, on his side, lost fifteen hundred men, but they were chiefly Gauls, whom he could best afford to lose.

Nor was this the end of the Roman disasters, for no sooner had the news of this terrible defeat reached Rome than it was followed by the tidings of a battle gained by Maharbal alone. For Cnœus Servilius, having heard that Hannibal had entered

Etruria and was near Flaminius, started at once with the intention of joining him. But his excellent intentions had been frustrated completely by the diplomatic move made by Hannibal in setting fire to all the houses and devastating the whole country of Etruria before the very eyes of Flaminius. result had been, to quote the flippant Chœras, that it had rained, if not exactly bullocks and babies, at all events blows and butchery at Thrasymene. Servilius, however, like a good general, anxious to help his fellow consul, had sent on a body of four thousand cavalry in advance, thinking that even if he could not himself arrive in time with the infantry, these horsemen would. They were all gallant troops, well mounted, and under the command of a certain Caius Centenius. these troops arrived in time for the battle of Lake Thrasymene they would probably have been slaughtered there and then. But they were three or four days too late. The delay, however, made but little difference in the result. For old Sosilus got timely warning from his spies of their approach, and informed Hannibal upon the very day that Maharbal took the six thousand prisoners. Again, with the object of keeping Maharbal at constant hard campaigning work, so as not to give him time for thinking, Hannibal deputed to him a separate and large command, which should by rights of seniority more fitly have been entrusted to Mago or to General He sent him off with all the light-armed troops and a considerable body of Iberian cavalry to seek for and attack Centenius when found. Maharbal came up with the Romans in a day or two, and he and his men, both horse and foot, being full of confidence and valour after Thrasymene, charged

They charged with such impetuosity, the light-armed footmen by Maharbal's directions clinging to the stirrups of the horsemen, that at the first shock half of the Romans were unhorsed. The footmen had let go the stirrups just before the shock of the two bodies of cavalry meeting, but now they bounded upon the dismounted Romans and slew them to a man, while the horsemen pursued the remainder to a hill, not

far distant, where they defended themselves right valiantly for the night. But the following morning, charging gallantly up the hill, the young Numidian leader defeated them utterly. The fury of his charge was so great that the enemy, intimidated, broke without waiting for him to come to close quarters, and would have fled, but that they found confronting them a large party of Balearic slingers and archers, and some of the cavalry which Maharbal had sent round behind the hill to Finding themselves thus taken between two fires. their rear. they threw down their arms, and although before Maharbal was able to stay the carnage a good many of the Romans were killed by the slingers and archers, most of them fell alive into Thus, with a large number of prisoners, and with immense booty of fine horses and beautiful armour, Maharbal marched back to the headquarters near the Thrasvmene, covered with glory and honour. And after this week of perpetual fighting and carnage he ceased to be haunted by the spirit of Eugenia, whose image now soon faded from his mind, although he never forgot her completely so long as he lived.

Great were the rejoicings in the Carthaginian ranks after these tremendous successes, but for all that, Hannibal did not feel himself strong enough to attack Rome for the present.

Dividing the prisoners who were actual Romans among his troops, and releasing all the prisoners of the allies, telling them that he made war for Italy herself against the Romans only, he started once more. Gathering together all the spoils and the captured horses, of which he had an immense number, and taking his wounded with him, he now indulged himself in what may be described as a kind of military promenade. Entirely unopposed, but plundering and killing all the male inhabitants whom he met, just to indulge in his hatred for the Romans, he leisurely marched across Central Italy to the province of Umbria, and passing through Umbria, travelled on slowly to the southward through Picenum, where he arrived with all his army upon the shores of the Adriatic. Here he established a fortified camp in the midst of a most fertile country.

Right glad, indeed, were he and his army to behold the sea

once more; for they had not seen salt water now for many months. Right glad also were the troops to rest, for they had become wearied of carrying along all the wealth that they had amassed. Moreover, from the hardships of the campaign, many of the men were suffering from scurvy, and the horses were covered with scab. Fortunately, the Carthaginians had captured among other things great quantities of old wine, and by continuous bathing of their wounds with this, both horses and men were soon restored to health and strength.

Meanwhile, the state of despair to which the proud Romans had been reduced can be better imagined than described. The whole of the inhabitants of the city of Rome, who had hitherto been ever accustomed to hear of nought but the victories of their troops, were now reduced to a condition of abject terror, and it is probable that had Rome but been attacked it would have fallen.

From this camp in this fertile country, Hannibal was able to send messengers by sea to Carthage, and on from Carthage to his daughter in New Carthage, with tidings of his wonderful career of success.

Again he now offered to Maharbal the opportunity not only of returning to New Carthage to join his beloved Elissa, but of also proceeding first of all, as his envoy, to carry the good news and a great portion of the Roman spoils to Carthage itself, thus 'giving him an opportunity of revisiting his own native land in Libya. But as he had retused before, so now did Maharbal sturdily refuse again to leave his general's side.

"Nay, nay, Hannibal," he replied. "I am not one of those who change their minds. I have sworn to remain with thee, and remain with thee I will. I shall doubtless, if I be spared, have plenty of time to pass with Elissa after the war is over. And," he continued, laughing, "as for seeing my native country, my native country is the back of a war-horse."

"Then wouldst thou probably see plenty of thy native country in Spain," replied Hannibal; "for, from all accounts, my brother Hasdrubal is likely to be hard pushed to it there shortly. For not only is Cnœus Scipio there, but Publius Scipio, he whom thou didst wound at the Ticinus, hath proceeded thither also, and doubtless many of those discontented Iberians, especially the tribes north of the Ebro, will desert to their standard. Fighting there will be in Iberia, and plenty of it, as well as here, and thy strong right arm may, for all I know, be needed some day even to defend the honour of her whom thou lovest so much in New Carthage. So think of it, lad, before definitely refusing. 'Twill be thy last chance."

Maharbal's bronzed face turned a shade paler, and he started at the idea of harm happening to Elissa. For a second, and a second only, he hesitated, then made up his mind once for all.

"Tush!" he said resolutely, "Elissa will be safe enough in New Carthage. Not all the Scipios in the world could take that city. Hannibal, my place is, as I have said, here by thy side. I remain with thee."

"Thank ye, lad!" said Hannibal warmly; and, moved by so much devotion, he stretched forth his hand, and warmly clasped that of his faithful adherent:

"And, now," he said, "as that is settled, come with me across the camp, and let us seek Mago, for I must send him in thy stead to Carthage, and on, after a while, into Spain. Perhaps, after all, it would be as well if one of the sons of Hamilcar Barca should be seen just now for a while in Carthage, to tell of his brother's successes, and to ask for the reinforcements of men and money that we now sorely need. Especially, they should send us men, for the waste of life hath been terrible indeed since we marched out of Saguntum. Yet both thou and I will miss Mago, lad; and who knows if we shall ever either of us see him again."

"Ay, Hannibal, I shall indeed miss Mago, for I love him truly like a brother. But yonder he is, standing by the guard tent; I will step across and call him to thee."

"Nay, let us go together, lad, for I am anxious to take a glance round the camp, and we can talk to him as we go."

So together they went, and joined Mago.

CHAPTER X.

FRIENDS MUST PART.

It was upon a beautiful summer's morning that Mago embarked for Carthage. The country all around the Carthaginian camp was, after a shower on the previous night, looking its very best. The green leaves of the vines, all bedewed with the raindrops, glistening in their little hollows, dispensed a sweet odour in the clear, refreshing air. The verdant cornfields, waving before the gentle sea-breeze, softly rustled with a soothing sound, displaying, as they moved, the large red poppies previously hidden beneath their bending stems. the dim distance, the peaks of the Apennines stood up purple and sharp to the azure sky, while here and there a fleecy white cloud softly rested upon some mountain crest, nestling around the hill-top, and embracing it lovingly, as a pure maiden softly enfolding her lover in the embrace of her snowy arms. Upon the groves of chestnut trees the morning sun, striking upon one side and lighting them up vividly, made all the more remarkable the contrast with the gloomy shades which hovered in long, dark streaks along the branches where the sunbeams had not yet fallen. Here and there from a belt of sweetscented pine trees could be heard the soft, trilling notes of Philomel, the sad-voiced nightingale; while closer at hand, flowing past the fallen tree trunk, upon which two warriors were seated, there rippled merrily by a little streamlet, sparkling like silver in the morning rays.

At some distance in the foreground, as if to show that all in this world is not peace, there stood line upon line of snowwhite tents, denoting the presence of an enormous camp, while behind the camp the blue and scarcely ruffled waters of the Adriatic faded away in the far distance into the blue of the sky, with which it seemed to merge its waters. It was a morning made for love, for all that should be sweet and delightful, a morning fit for heaven itself. But it was a morn that was witness of a great sorrow—the parting of two lifelong friends—who felt, they knew not why, that they were communing with each other for the last time on earth.

Mago and Maharbal, each, although quite young, the hero of a hundred bloody fights, sat upon the fallen tree, hand clasped in hand as though they were but two young children. For long they sat in silence, drinking in all the beauties of nature around, yet their hearts too full to speak. So great was the sorrow they felt, that a kind of awkwardness had fallen upon them both. They did not know what to say to each other now that the time had come for parting. These two, who, with bared sword and gleaming eye, so often had charged together side by side into the very jaws of death, to issue on the other side of some hostile squadron, with the warm blood dripping from their deadly blades, were now speechless. At length Mago spoke, while gripping his friend's hand closer.

"I shall never forget it, Maharbal. I shall remember it all my life."

"What?" said Maharbal, suddenly starting from his reverie, "remember what, Mago?"

"How thou didst save me from that most blood-thirsty Gaul, at whose mercy I was in that awful night of our second engagement on the Alps. I can see thee now, in my mind's eye, casting him and his horse together over the precipice. By Moloch! but thou didst display a terrible strength with this right hand of thine, snapping his hand at the wrist like a carrot even as he was striking at me."

"Tush, man! hold thy peace. I did not do one half for thee what thou thyself didst for me before Saguntum—ay, and once again at the Trebia, when three Romans had, owing to the slippery ground, unhorsed me, and would have slain me but for thy killing two of them and putting the third to flight. But him, thou wilt doubtless remember, I pursued and slew

myself. He was a terrible black-looking scoundrel, but a very coward at heart, or he would not have fled when thou wast but one to three, standing over my prostrate body. I killed him easily."

"Yea, I mind well the circumstance. But what shall we both do now when we can do no more slaying together? I loved thee always as thine elder brother, Maharbal, and feel inclined—laugh not at me, I pray—to weep when I think that no longer thou and I shall be with the thundering squadron in the thick of the same combat, oft times side by side. How oft have I watched thy gigantic form from afar, cutting and slaying, when thou knewest not that I was even observing thee."

"And I too, Mago! How often have not I watched thy crimson and white plume floating from thy silver helmet. To my dying day I never shall forget the anxiety I felt on thy behalf that day of the fight on the Ticinus, when, myself left behind in the oak trees, I saw thee a dozen times in the clash of battle, surrounded by the enemy, but thank the gods, invariably issuing the victor. Ay, we have had grand times together! but now what shall I do without thee?"

"Hast thou not got Chœras?" asked Mago tentatively.

"Ay, I have Chœras," answered Maharbal drily, "but is Chœras the Mago whom I have loved from boyhood?"

There was a silence again after this, for the last remark was one that admitted of no reply. Then Mago spoke again.

"Thou wilt succeed to the command of all the cavalry when I am gone, Maharbal; be careful of the Gallic horsemen; their chief, Vridomarchus, is not to be relied on—watch thou him well."

"Ay, I will watch him, and slay him too, for thy sake, if he hath offended thee in aught."

"Nay, slay him not, at least not yet, but rule him with a hand of iron; make him fear thee, and all will go well. Treat him ever like a dog, for kindness he doth not understand, and he is verily like the dog that biteth the hand that feeds him."

"I thank thee, Mago, but I think I will slay him; he will be far less trouble that way."

Another pause ensued, and then, looking his comrade straight in the face, the young General Mago asked the question that Maharbal had been expecting.

"And what about my niece Elissa? shall I tell her or no that Hannibal offered unto thee the chance of going to Carthage and then to Spain instead of me, or rather before me?"

"Ay, tell her, Mago—she may as well know me as I am. I love her deeply, 'tis true, but I love my duty to my country and to Hannibal more than all else."

"And what about Eugenia? shall I mention that circumstance? I think, for mine own sake, 'twere wiser not, but 'twould vastly raise thee in Elissa's esteem to know how thou hadst scorned another for her love's sake."

Maharbal sprung to his feet and covered his eyes with his hands as the remembrance of the dreadful tragedy with Eugenia flashed vividly across his mind. He turned and faced Mago.

"I would rather, oh my friend, my more than brother, that thou shouldst say nought of that matter. It is not that I fear that she should know that I have slain a woman, but I would not have her think that I seek or have sought to glorify myself by assuming for her sake a virtue that I have not felt. For, by the holy gods, Mago, it was, I truly believe, chiefly for thine own sake that I acted as I did. But thine honour and mine honour were at stake, Eugenia's honour likewise. In truth I know not rightly whether I thought of Elissa or no, the whole affair hath been so horrible unto me. Therefore, Mago, while in no wise binding thee, I think that I would rather that that matter remained secret."

"Ay, secret it shall be, but now tell me this; hast thou not a letter for Elissa? if so, let me have it now. I shall see her within the year."

"Yea, I have a letter ready, and here it is. But stay a moment, I see a wild rose climbing yonder, I would enclose a blossom or two and a few leaves of the sweet briar within the

folds. Tell her that I have pressed them to my lips, and send them to her with all my love. I have no other message to send; but I may never see her again, therefore tell her simply this, that I am faithful still."

Maharbal plucked the wild roses and enclosed them within his scroll, which he gave to Mago. Then the two warriors and friends, who had seen so many bloody fields together, clasped each other in their brawny arms, all armour-clad as they were, even as they had been two weak, foolish girls. After this they descended the hill almost in silence to the camp.

Here there was great pomp and parade, and the great General Mago was escorted to his ship with much ceremony by a large guard of honour composed of men who had served under him in many a sanguinary conflict.

And now, with the departure of Mago, it is time that we turned our attention for awhile to what had been going on elsewhere.

CHAPTER XI.

ELISSA AS A WARRIOR.

AFTER the departure of the army with her father and her lover from Spain, a great blank had fallen upon the life of the young girl Elissa. For the dull days had succeeded to the dull days, and still no news came to relieve the anxious heart of the ardent girl.

Her uncle Hasdrubal was away with the army that Hannibal had left in Northern Iberia. Melania, at whose memory her pretty teeth met tightly, was dead. Cleandra had left her. There was absolutely no one to whom she could mention in confidential talk even the name of Maharbal, save the foolish Princess Cœcilia. To mention him to her was, so Elissa soon found, to expose herself to many a jarring note, for so thoughtless was the buxom lady, so absolutely tactless, that she contrived to say ever the wrong thing when referring to the absent lover. It was not done intentionally, or from ill-nature, but that only made matters all the worse when she blurted out some such remark as this:

"Oh! doubtless he hath half-a-dozen other sweethearts by this time, those soldiers are all alike, my niece, never faithful when once their backs are turned, and very often not even when at home. Oh! thou needst not look at me like that, Elissa, 'tis absolutely true, I assure thee, and about all of them. Think on my late husband Hasdrubal, how disgracefully he behaved. But that is what they are; I tell thee the truth; ay, verily all soldiers are like that. 'Tis no use thy pining for Maharbal, nor waiting for him either. Therefore, if he come not back very shortly, thou shouldst take another lover. As for Hannibal, thy father, him thou canst never hope to see again, after his starting off on such a madcap errand as this invasion of Italia by land."

This kind of speech was not very consoling. But it was what Elissa had to expect, and to put up with if she ever mentioned her lover's name. Therefore she at length learned to hold her peace where he was concerned.

"Let us talk about some other matter," she said testily, one day after some such conversation. "As for me, Princess Cœcilia, thanks be to the gods! I do not share thy opinion of men, nor deem that all can be so bad. Maybe 'tis fortunate for me that I have not had thine experience. Therefore, I will continue to put my faith in Maharbal. But I have now other and weightier matters to discuss with thee. I have this very day received a lengthy despatch from mine uncle Hasdrubal, and 'tis most serious. It seemeth that the war hath not by any means gone well with him for some time past.

"Firstly, by means of the base treason of one Abilvx. an Iberian whom he trusted, General Bostar, who commandeth at Saguntum, hath, being deceived by Abilyx, most foolishly delivered over unto the two Roman generals all the hostages of the Northern Iberian tribes. The Romans in turn have given up these hostages to the Iberians, and thereby secured important alliances. Secondly, General Hanno, the son of Gisco, hath been severely defeated, and both he and the king Andobales have fallen into the hands of the Romans. Thirdly. Hasdrubal's own fleet hath been defeated close by the land, and in sight of mine uncle's army drawn up on the beach. cowardly sailors fled to the shore, and, beaching their vessels, which they abandoned, sought the protection of Hasdrubal's force. The only bright spot in the cloudy sky is that Hasdrubal, with a flying column of eight thousand infantry and one thousand horse, hath himself surprised a great number of the sailors of the Roman fleet on shore, scattered about the country, and killed them. With reference to this last affair, Hasdrubal writeth that Cnœus Scipio hath since then joined his fleet, and punished the authors of the disaster according to the Roman custom! I wonder what that may be? 'tis no doubt something terrible."

"Ay, doubtless something horrid, probably crucifying them

head downward, or else impaling them, or maybe breaking them on the wheel," replied the princess. "I trust," she added consolingly, "that neither Hannibal nor Maharbal have yet been similarly served. But 'tis more than likely."

"With all this." continued Elissa, ignoring the pleasant suggestion conveyed in the latter part of Cœcilia's remark. "thou wilt easily see that it behoveth us ourselves to be more careful than ever in our defences here of New Carthage. strong though we be, what is there to guarantee us, like Bostar. against treachery from within, when, should the Romans make a sudden descent in our neighbourhood, we may all fall into their hands? May the sacred gods protect us from such a fate! But as one never knows who may prove a traitor, nor what may chance in war, I intend myself henceforward in my capacity of Regent and Governor to devote far more time personally than heretofore to the troops of the garrison, such as to seeing to their efficiency and readiness. For it shall never be said of a daughter of Hannibal that, from sheer idleness, she neglected her trust to her country. treachery, should I ever suspect any human soul within these walls, whether man or woman, Iberian or Carthaginian, of either deliberately or by foolishness committing such an action as should endanger the safety of the city, I should speedily make use of mine authority to punish such an one according to the Carthaginian custom in such cases, which, as witness the sacrifices to Moloch, can upon occasion be made quite as terrible as any Roman custom. Therefore let such a one be careful."

During the latter part of her speech, Elissa looked very pointedly at the little princess, in whom, owing to her light character, she had no great faith, and who trembled before her in consequence of the pointed remark.

"By all the gods!" replied the usually merry lady, with blanching cheek, "wherefore dost thee look at me like that, Elissa? Surely thou wouldst never suspect me of turning traitor? Only think of it, what on earth should I do myself," she continued, "were I to be captured and fall into the hands of the Roman officers? I am sure I should die of fright," and she gave a little giggle.

Elissa had now shot her bolt intended to convey a warning, and that it had struck home she knew. She now therefore said, banteringly:

"Thou die of fright! by no means, my dear aunt; methinks that on the contrary thou wouldst be quite happy under such circumstances. I have frequently heard that some of those Romans are very handsome men, and how could they fail to be at once struck by thine attractions and charms?"

"Ah, yes, that is true, certainly," replied the vain little lady, beaming at the compliment. "But for all that I fancy I am better off here. I believe that the Romans object to their ladies wearing veils even out in the sun. Think, my niece, how terribly trying to the complexion. Never could I survive such a trial as that; 'twould be worse even than being crucified according to Roman custom upside down, a very unbecoming posture that." And she gave a little shudder.

"And one," replied Elissa, smiling in spite of herself, "that I trust neither thou nor I, mine aunt, may ever be seen in, and it behoveth us therefore to be more than extra careful. Thus, by letting all in the city know that we are constantly on the alert, we shall have less to fear from treason. Moreover, the enemy themselves, even if they have spies among us, learning that we are ever prepared, will be less likely to dare to attack us, seeing how strong is our position."

One of Elissa's amusements latterly had been in learning warlike exercises, such as the use of spear and broadsword, and throwing the javeline, and from this time forth she, who had hitherto not had much to occupy herself, became in very sooth the ruling military spirit in New Carthage. For she was now not only the Civil Governor but the active general as well, and not a guard was mounted, nor a man moved without her orders. Clad in a helmet and a light cuirass, both of steel inlaid with gold scroll work, and with a jewel-hilted sword by her side, she now frequently mounted a war-horse, for she was a splendid rider, and reviewed the troops in person. Not

content with merely looking carefully and watchfully after the troops of the garrison, she also constantly made fresh levies among the Iberians, whom she caused to be trained and then forwarded to her uncle Hasdrubal at the seat of war. In constantly employing herself in this way the days hung less wearily on her hands. Thus first the months and then the years rolled by, and from the cares of government and the active part that she took in the management of the troops, the pain of the separation became gradually less, and the self-reliant young woman began in time to cease to think about her lover so exclusively.

When Elissa took to live with her a charming young maiden to whom she was much attached, Sophonisba, the daughter of a certain General Hasdrubal, the son of the Gisco slaughtered so basely by the mercenaries in the truceless war, the void in the young girl's life became partly filled. Sophonisba was a remarkably handsome girl of some fifteen summers. Educated in Carthage, she was quick-witted and sharp beyond her years, and made a most excellent companion. With her society, life was not for Elissa quite so dreary as heretofore.

At last, after two and a half years had elapsed, a large fleet of Carthaginian ships, full of reinforcements for Hasdrubal, were one day sighted off the harbour mouth. When they had entered the roadstead and anchored, Elissa's young and favourite uncle Mago came ashore, bearing to her the letters of her father and her lover, the latter containing the wild roses now long since plucked on the Adriatic shore.

At sight of the dear one's handwriting and the withered roses, the whole of love's young dream came back with a gush of feeling. Nor did Mago forget to praise his friend in every way, and speak of his bravery and constancy to his niece, whose heart thrilled with pride to hear her lover thus praised. When, however, Mago informed Elissa that, had he so willed it, Maharbal might have returned to New Carthage in his stead, the impression which he made upon the young girl's mind was quite contrary to what the warrior had hoped. For he, looking from a soldier's point of view, had imagined that she would be

pleased at finding that her lover was of such a noble character, able to prefer duty to self; whereas, on the contrary, she was only angered, for with a woman's feelings, she could not understand how anybody, or anything in the world, be it honour, duty, or anything else, could have been preferred by her lover to herself upon such an opportunity. Mago, perceiving this evil impression, was sorry that he had mentioned the circum stance at all.

"Surely!" Elissa exclaimed passionately, "he hath had enough of fighting; surely he hath already done enough for Hannibal, for honour, and for his country to have been able to spare a little time for me who have, all lonely, been eating out my heart for him so long. And he is mine! Before the gods I have a right to him; yet am I neglected thus! Surely I was worth more than this! But since he would not come to me himself, I will have none of his letters, nay, nor of his miserable roses either!"

Stamping on the floor, with anger in her eyes, she tore twice in twain the scroll that Mago had brought her from Maharbal, and dashed it to the ground. Then casting the withered roses to the floor beside the fluttering pieces of papyrus, Elissa spurned them with her foot. How glorious the outraged girl looked in her righteous anger! But then, a revulsion of feeling setting in, she suddenly cast herself upon her sympathetic uncle's breast in a flood of tears, while he vainly sought to console her. After this, she broke from him again, picked up the scattered fragments, tenderly picked up also the crushed and shrivelled rose leaves, and clutching them to her beating bosom, fled from the apartment. Poor Elissa! accustomed as she was to have her own way in everything, her pride had indeed been sadly hurt; but love was after all still the lord of all.

It must be owned that hers was a terrible and trying position. Maid but no maid, wife but no wife, ruling over New Carthage and all the surrounding territory in Southern Spain with princely powers, with all the might of Carthage to support her in her authority, yet she was powerless to have her will. Working, too, as she ever was, for the good of her country, she

was yet condemned by an adverse fate to gain no good herself, the one thing that she desired in this world to make life worth living being denied to her.

First it had been her father who had, for his own reasons, torn her lover from her arms just as she had learned to know what love was: and now it was that noble young soldier, the flower of the army, Maharbal himself, who had preferred, or so it seemed, the undying fame of military glory, which he was earning in Italy, to her loving arms. It has been said by one. herself a loving woman, in an analysis of the sexes, that absence makes man but not woman indifferent, the beloved object gradually fading from the former's mind. "For," she writes, "men are not made like women, and in time they do forget, although they do not think at the first that they will, ever. But I have closely studied them, and have discovered that in their relations to each other, women can live on a past, but men always need an immediate future to look forward to, or else everything is lost in a mist of oblivion. To women 'have beens' are enough for ever, whilst men require to have their five senses constantly occupied on the people they love, or else soon grow cooler, and in time cold. With a man, his love is deep and deeply intense for a little while; with a woman, it is not so deep or intense at the time, but spreads over her whole life."

With reference to the above analysis, which certainly is true in parts as regards the world in general, and yet which seems far too sweeping when applied to individual cases, Elissa was one of those whom absence did not render indifferent; she was also one of those women whose love had spread over her life. But it could by no means be said of her that she found that the "have beens" were enough for ever, nor that her love had not been so deep and intense as Maharbal's at the time. On the contrary, it was not only equally deep and intense, but far more violent and incapable of being kept under control. Elissa had not therefore been satisfied with merely living on the past, but had been ardently looking forward to a future when her five senses might be again gratified by the presence of her lover. Her disappointment and depression were all the

greater, and her state of "accablement" became more utter, as the loving words and expressions conveyed to her in her lover's letter only made her desire his personal presence the more intensely.

As with the pieced-together letter in her hand, and the faded roses by her side, she lay silently weeping upon her luxurious couch, she felt as if she had been struck with blows, so limp, so crushed was she. But after a while, proud woman that she was, she called all her pride, all her courage, to her aid, and rising from her couch rejoined her uncle.

Her beautiful face was very pale, and there were deep violet rings under her eyes, when, laying her bejewelled fingers upon Mago's arm, she addressed him as follows:

"Mine uncle Mago, it is not good for a girl to be so much alone as I have been for years past. Neither father nor mother have I ever had with me, nor even thou, mine uncle Mago, nor yet have I mine uncle Hasdrubal. Until I took my friend Sophonisba to live with me, what society have I had, save that of the empty-headed Princess Cœcilia, a woman utterly devoid of intellect, whose only ideas are vapid flirtations with anything or anybody—which foolish promiscuity maketh her somewhat a danger in the city, by the way—and how best to take care of her complexion.

"No wonder, then, oh mine uncle! that—neglected thus, and thrown so utterly upon mine own resources—I have dwelt far too much in my mind upon my lover Maharbal; for lover only he is to me henceforth; I will continue no longer the farce of calling him my husband. Had he been my husband, or desired to be my husband, he would have come to me now. Therefore is he but my lover and nought else, and, my lover having failed me, I will stay here to brood in New Carthage no longer, but will accompany thee for a while to the war against the Romans, with this thine army that thou hast brought. I shall presently take thee all over the defences of the town, and thou wilt see that I have not hitherto betrayed my trust, for all is in order. And thou, mine uncle, shalt this day present unto me one of the superior officers of thy force, a capable man, to accompany

us round the walls, and be also present at a review of my troops, which I intend to hold in thine honour. To such a one will I delegate mine authority here during mine absence, and thou shalt ratify such appointment. Were it possible for me to know whither in Italy to seek my father Hannibal, it is to him I would now proceed, and it would perhaps be more fitting that I should do so, but for one reason. That reason thou canst easily fathom; it exists in the presence of Maharbal with my father's army. For 'twould seem to all that I were pursuing him, or that since he would not come to me I had gone to him, and that shall never be said of Elissa, daughter of Hannibal. Now, mine uncle, I have said: I accompany thee if thou wilt but have me?" and she threw an arm around his neck caressingly.

"Ay, my dear niece, right gladly will I have thee with me, and do even as thou hast said. For 'tis true that thou hast been neglected hitherto, and life is short, especially in times of war, and blood is thicker than water. I would right fain have thee with me, save for the danger that thou mayst run of thy life. Say, if I take thee, wilt thou promise me to be very careful of thine own safety, my pretty one, my gallant soldier's daughter?" And gently the uncle stroked the dark tresses of the young woman, whose pale but determined face so near his own shone with nobility, courage, and determination.

She embraced Mago, and smiled softly but somewhat ironically.

"Thou good uncle! I knew well that thou couldst not say nay. But take care of myself!—nay, I will make no such promise. For am I not Hannibal's daughter? Ay, and his representative—yea, even a general like unto thyself, although I never yet have led my troops in the field. Moreover, thou hast never seen me in my war harness; but thou shalt, and that right soon too."

And now, laughing outright, she clapped her hands loudly, when two female slaves came running in.

"Order my charger, and prepare me mine armour instantly, and be in readiness to attire me."

The slave girls retired instantly to do her bidding.

"Now, mine uncle," quoth Elissa, blowing him back a kiss as she stood in the doorway before following them, "say farewell for a space to Elissa the woman, for in a moment thou shalt see only Elissa the soldier, one who will, when required, bring with her to the battle, under old Gisco, a body of well-disciplined troops, whom she hath trained herself and can thoroughly rely upon. Some of thy large force can remain here to replace them in the garrison of New Carthage."

When, a few minutes later, Elissa reappeared, fully attired in her light but glorious armour, carrying on her left arm a shining and beautiful shield, inlaid with the horse of Carthage in gold, and having two or three light throwing javelines in her right hand, Mago could not resist a cry of admiration,

"By the great gods Melcareth and Moloch, thou art beautiful! I would to the gods, indeed, that Hannibal could but see thee thus, Elissa; verily, he would be proud of his daughter."

"Who is, as thou shalt learn, mine uncle, by no means a maiden travestied in warlike panoply merely for stage effect. Wilt thou accompany me to the verandah? Now, what object shall I strike with this javeline?"

Mago pointed out a distant and slender tree trunk.

Poising the javeline for a second, Elissa sent the weapon whizzing through the air, and lo! it was quivering, buried to its head in the bark of the sapling.

"Another object?" she asked.

"The silver figure of the god of love on the fountain; but methinks 'tis over far."

"Not too far for me," quoth Elissa; "this is a game that I play well, mine uncle, for I have practised greatly."

Again a javeline flew through the air with the most marvellous precision, striking the neck of the little silver god with such force that it was transfixed from side to side by the gleaming steel.

"By the great goddess of love herself!" cried Mago, in admiration, "never saw I such dexterity. 'Tis evident that her son's arrows are but a toy compared to Elissa's javelines."

Elissa smiled.

"Now, wouldst see me on my war-horse, mine uncle Mago? 'Twas Maharbal himself who taught me to ride when but a child, and I am on horseback, as thou shalt see, a very Numidian. I have neither saddle nor stirrups; but, merely for show's sake, a bridle have I, with silver chains for reins; likewise, I have a golden saddle-cloth, to the surcingle of which the reins are, as thou seest, attached to prevent them falling."

An orderly was leading a splendid bay charger, thus caparisoned, up and down before the verandah of the palace. Taking a short run, Elissa sprang lightly into her seat across the horse.

"Some darts," she cried; "give me some darts."

Some half-dozen short, but heavy-headed darts were given to her, which she grasped with her left hand below the shield.

Then pricking the horse with the point of one of the darts that she took in her right hand, she started off at full gallop. Away she sped across the lawn, and in and out among the trees, at such a pace that Mago feared to see her brains dashed out against the tree trunks. But nay, emerging safely from the trees she swept across an open space beyond the fish pond, all the time performing warlike evolutions with her shield; raising it, and protecting her head, or throwing herself flat upon the horse's back, and covering head and shoulders with it completely.

A third evolution she performed, and that, likewise, while still at full gallop. Suddenly, Mago could see nothing but the glittering shield held alongside the horse's neck, thus protecting it. All that was visible of Elissa herself was one small foot barely showing above the horse's croup, her whole body being concealed behind the horse. Then, as the horse came round again in a circle, thundering along the path which led before the palace verandah, Elissa, springing up to her seat again, discharged, with the rapidity of lightning, all her darts in rapid succession With each she struck the object aimed at. With the last of the whizzing weapons she transfixed and

slew a glittering peacock which, frightened by the galloping horse, flew, from its perch upon a marble portico, screaming overhead: Then whirling short round again, she dashed back at the same speed, stopped suddenly by using the reins for the first time, and pulling her horse upon his haunches, sprung to the ground in a second as lightly as she had mounted. She ran swiftly up the steps to her uncle, somewhat out of breath, and with a heightened colour.

"What dost thou think of my horsemanship? The princess saith that 'tis indelicate! But what dost thou think of thy warrior niece thyself? Is she fit to accompany thee to the war against the Romans?"

"Fit to accompany me to the war! Thou art fit to command the army. Why, by Moloch himself! never, save in my beloved brother-in-arms Maharbal, who did himself instruct thee, saw I such horsemanship, combined with such precision in throwing the weapons. In very truth will I take thee with me unto the battle, ay, and willingly, for woe! I say, be to the enemy who should find himself within reach of thy darts. But one thing thou must promise me. Keep thou ever to this Numidian style of warfare, advancing and retiring on horseback, and casting of darts and javelines. But the use of the sword, for which thy bodily strength would not be sufficient, ever avoid; likewise avoid, if possible, dismounting and fighting on foot."

"Nevertheless, the use of the sword I know too, mine uncle, for good old Gisco hath taught it me for years past."

"Maybe! Maybe that he hath; but, for all that, promise me to keep, if possible, to the horse and the dart-throwing, in which thou art more than the match for any Roman, and thou shalt come with me into the bloodiest battle. Give me thy word, Elissa."

"I promise thee, mine uncle Mago, to do thy bidding in this matter, and, further, in all else appertaining unto warfare, to be entirely subservient unto thee."

Thus it came to pass that, after a year or two's campaigning, Elissa was present at the fateful battle in which Mago defeated and overthrew Cnœus Scipio. Further, while charging alongside Mago in the hottest of the battle, it was even the hand of Hannibal's daughter which discharged the missile which struck the Roman General in the joints of his armour, and cost him his life. As at about the same time, Hasdrubal defeated Publius Scipio, and slew him also, for a time the Carthaginians completely regained the upper hand in Spain. For the brothers Scipio, being both dead, there was no one left to lead the Roman forces.

Mago and Hasdrubal now joined hands, and drove the shattered Roman troops into various camps and cities well to the north of the Ebro, after which, Elissa, accompanied by her uncle Hasdrubal and all his army, returned to New Carthage for the winter. But her uncle Mago still kept the field.

CHAPTER XII.

SOPHONISBA AND SCIPIO.

HASDRUBAL, remaining in New Carthage for a space longer, when spring set in gave to his niece one day a delightful surprise.

"Elissa," quoth he, one morn, "wouldst thou like to travel? wouldst thou perchance like to see the African soil whence thy fathers sprung? 'Tis charming, I warrant thee, at this season of the year, and well worthy of a visit."

Elissa sprung from her seat and dropped her embroidery work, for she had, since the battle in which she had slain Cnœus Scipio, resumed, on her return to New Carthage, her ordinary woman's attire and feminine avocations.

"Visit Carthage! mine uncle?" she cried excitedly, clasping her hands in glee; "'tis the dream of my life to visit that glorious home of mine ancestors."

"Not so fast! not so fast, my niece; I said not visit Carthage, for there I may not send thee at present, but visit African soil, For I have it in my head to despatch thither an embassy to Syphax, King of the Massæsyllians, a near relative of thy lover Maharbal, of which embassy I propose to make General Hasdrubal, son of Gisco, the chief. I further propose to send with him his daughter, thy friend and companion, that beautiful young girl Sophonisba, and 'tis not meet that she should travel without a responsible female companion. Therefore, shouldst thou fancy a short sea journey, thou art welcome to take advantage of this opportunity. 'Twill be, methinks, a change to thee to visit the court of a prince upon African soil, after having all thy life met with no princes save those of the

Iberian race. His kingdom is most fertile and lovely, much resembling in all things the climate of this southern part of Spain; the language thou knowest, for it is thine own Phoenician tongue. Moreover, thou speakest Greek fluently, wherewith thou canst discourse with strangers should they be present. Now, what dost say? Wilt thou go or nay? 'tis a chance that may not hap again in thy lifetime."

"Go! mine uncle, of course I will go. I long, indeed, to visit African soil; and though it be not Carthage, yet are these Numidians the vassals and friends of Carthage. 'Tis almost the same thing."

"Vassals of Carthage they are, and friends sometimes. Syphax was the friend of Carthage until lately, and likewise his nephew Massinissa, ruler of Massyllia, the adjoining country to Carthage itself. But latterly the Romans have been tampering with both, and I have news that they, being sorely pressed by Hannibal in Italy, are sending, or have already sent, a new embassy with rich presents and many promises to these princes. with a view to securing their alliance. Therefore, it behoves me to be upon my guard, and to bribe them also. Fortunately we have all the wealth of the silver mines of Southern Iberia at our command, and can therefore send, without impoverishing ourselves, such riches to these barbarian kings as the beggarly Romans can never even dream of. And that, therefore, is what I shall do. Would but to the gods, I could send the treasure to my brother Hannibal himself but no man knoweth where to find him. He hath, 'tis said, recently utterly crushed the Romans in some tremendous battle, but no man knows, as I said but now, where he actually is. At all events, that is the reason that the Carthaginian Government allege for giving him no succour, and as, despite his repeated demands for reinforcements, the Government send him none, and they will not give me a fleet to send to his support, I cannot myself, unfortunately. assist him in that way. But by preventing the Numidians from joining the Roman standard I can in one way aid Hannibal. And tis possible thy going into Africa might further the matter. For thou'rt young, handsome, and clever, and thy

wits might win what the sterling qualities of General Hasdrubal. the son of Gisco, might not, with his rough and ready tongue. be able to accomplish. Further, Sophonisba may attract the fancy of the King Syphax. As for thyself, thou art affianced. to say the least of it, to his kinsman. Maharbal, so thou art not only safe from any proposals of marriage, but wilt come into his family group with particular rights to be treated with the greatest consideration. Moreover, thou hast tact in the highest degree, and should, as I tell thee in confidence I desire, the African prince become enamoured of Sophonisba, whose charms are really remarkable, thou canst guide the maiden herself, and impress upon her the advantages of union with a For although this Numidian hath many concubines, he is yet unmarried. And his friendship and real alliance would be of the greatest advantage to Hannibal at the present crisis. Therefore, my niece, thou canst by going to the court of this barbarian greatly aid my designs. He is, it seems, a really warlike man, and well worth the winning over to our country's cause, no matter what the bait employed. Moreover, he is, if not quite young, yet well-favoured, and such as any maiden might fancy. So also I hear is Massinissa, his nephew, but Syphax is the more powerful. But I have said enough, and if thou wilt accompany the mission I am convinced that thou wilt succeed."

"So poor Sophonisba is to be the bait! is she, mine uncle? Well, 'tis in our country's cause, and after all, 'tis something to become the wife of a king, that is to become herself a queen. Thou canst therefore rely upon me. Should the man not prove an absolute ogre, and thou sayst that he is far from that and well liking, I will persuade Sophonisba, although sorely shall I grieve to part with her, to marry him."

"Then that is settled, Elissa; keep thou thine own counsel entirely, and I will arrange about the details of the mission during the next few days. Breathe not to Sophonisba herself one single word of what I have said to thee."

Elissa laughed aloud and patted her uncle on the cheek.

"What dost thou take me for, oh, Hasdrubal the son of

Hamilcar? Am I like a babbling brook, or like the Princess Coecilia, widow of the late namesake and brother in-law?"

"Whom I detest most cordially. Nay, nay!" replied Hasdrubal, "may the gods forbid that thou shouldst resemble her, for she is odious! I have it in my mind to crucify her one of these days to encourage virtue in the other women in the palace. For she is most unvirtuous, and worse than that, most unwise. What can I do with her if I slay her not, thou knowest her well Elissa?"

"Watch her carefully, or marry her to someone, that is my advice. To crucify her would be most unjust, for she hath hitherto harmed no one. Her sole vice is folly, but that is, it must be owned, extreme."

"Well, well, we can see about the fool later on. I shall perhaps know how to deal with her. Methinks I will marry her to one of my lieutenants. There is a certain prefect of horse that would suit her admirably. He is of gigantic stature, almost as tall as thine own Maharbal."

"And she adores large men," replied Elissa. "Well, I counsel thee, mine uncle Hasdrubal, marry thou Cœcilia unto him without delay, then shalt thou be relieved of a constant danger in the palace. For there is no greater danger than in the constant presence of a foolish woman!"

"'Tis true, my niece—'tis most true. I must consider it. But now let us to the harbour and see about the ships."

So the pair left the palace together and strolled down to the harbour, where all fitting arrangements were made for the voyage to Africa.

A fortnight later Elissa found herself with Sophonisba, now a girl of seventeen, and her father Hasdrubal, the son of Gisco, arriving at the Court of Syphax, and there they were most royally entertained.

Syphax himself was a splendid Numidian. Some forty years of age, he was handsome, affable, well-instructed, and warlike. His bearing was indeed that of a prince. Frank and goodnatured, generous to a fault, he was a man who never suspected evil in others, because there was absolutely no guile in his own

disposition. His leanings were all towards Carthage, for until latterly the Carthaginians had ever treated him well, and if latterly they had not done so, he, with his generous nature, put the neglect simply down to the expenses incurred by the long continued war.

There were present at his court, which was most magnificent and luxurious, his nephew Massinissa, a small but muscular and wiry man of an entirely different type to Syphax himself, and also the members of a Roman embassy. And the head of this embassy was Scipio Tunior, who wore his left arm in a sling, and looked pale and an invalid. For he had been sorely wounded in two places at a comparatively recent battle, in which fight the man who had struck him down had been his old antagonist Maharbal. Now, by some strange dispensation of the gods, it was his lot to meet as friends in a foreign court not only an embassy of his country's enemies the Carthaginians, but also the beautiful daughter of Hannibal himself, Elissa, the betrothed of the very man whom upon three separate occasions he had met hand to hand, and upon every occasion to his own discomfiture. And now that he had met Elissa, he fell deeply in love with her at first sight.

Although it was the fashion of the Romans and Carthaginians to call all races but their own and the Greeks "barbarians," the word did not carry with it the significance that it has in these days; merely meaning at first the inhabitants of Berber, the country to the North of Africa. In fact, these very Numidians at whose court Elissa now found herself, were Berbers or Barbarians. The remnants of this old race, who are still numerous in the countries of Tunisia and Algeria, are called Berbers unto this day. And from applying first to the Berbers, the word barbarian came to have the signification of any foreigner of no matter what race.

If the Numidian princes were called barbarians, it must not be imagined that they were either barbaric in their ways, or that their residences were by any means barbaric. On the contrary, not only had they got the long-established civilisation and culture of the neighbouring country of Carthage to guide them in their architecture, but they had, in the beautiful horseshoe arch, a grace and art of their own which, introduced into Spain many hundreds of years later by the descendants of the Berbers, the conquering Moors, has left its traces unto this day in the Saracenic or Moorish arches of the Alhambra at Granada and other magnificent buildings.

The Carthaginian embassy was received in state, and when Elissa, on first landing, was borne in an open golden litter, with Sophonisba by her side, up to the palace steps, the two girls thought they had never seen anything so beautiful as the view of the land and sea from the hill upon which the palace stood, and the first appearance of the home of Syphax.

As they ascended the hillside to the sounds of sweet and somewhat melancholy music from the musicians of the escort, they traversed gardens blazing with geraniums and roses; the frequent orange blossom, shining with its waxen, heavy-scented petals on one side, being relieved everywhere by the crimson flowers of the pomegranate. Overhead the date palms rustled in the fresh sea-breeze, while below shone the blue sea, with a busy harbour full of shipping. All along the coast, into the far distance, could be seen a succession of green headlands, forming a charming variety to the blue of the foam-flecked sea below, and the blue of the cloud-flecked sky above.

But if the works of nature were beautiful all around, the works of man were beautiful also. For the front façade of the palace, beneath the shade of which Syphax and his suite was awaiting them, consisted of a long unbroken line of horse-shoe arches of purest marble, these arches being supported at each heel of the horse-shoe by double pillars of pure white marble also. Above the façade towered the palace, a marble building studded with horse-shoe-shaped windows everywhere. Around each of these windows, to afford relief to the eye, was a band, a foot wide, of polished black stone, the effect of the contrast being delightful. Leading up to the façade, which was raised some ten feet above the level of the ground, there was a magnificent and very wide double flight of curved marble steps, the curve of the steps again forming a perfect horse-shoe.

The double balustrades of this horse-shoe approach were scarlet and green, with climbing geraniums, while gracefully festooned up the marble pillars of the façade, and above the top of the arches, were seen the most magnificent clusters of the purple bourgainvillier flowers, and the graceful twining convolvulus, whose bells of deepest blue hung in brilliant contrast to the pale green leaves.

"Oh! what a lovely place," exclaimed Sophonisba. "Surely it must be the home of the gods themselves. Elissa, sawst thou ever a place so lovely as this? There is nothing in Carthage itself that can compare with it. Oh! I would that palace were mine."

"Who knows but it may become so some day?" replied Elissa, with a laugh. "Syphax is unmarried, thou knowest, and thy lovely fair skin and auburn tresses will assuredly attract him greatly if he be not of adamant, which, my Sophonisba, I have heard he is not by any means."

"Hush! Elissa," replied the young girl, blushing. "Yonder handsome, swarthy man, in the silver inlaid armour, standing before the rest, is doubtless Syphax himself. Ah! he descends the stair-case to meet us. I feel nervous; my heart is all in a flutter."

"Ay! right noble is his mien, enough to make the heart of any girl flutter; but now to salute him. Greeting! oh King Syphax. I, thy humble slave, whom thou seest before thee, am Elissa, daughter of Hannibal, and this maiden by my side is Sophonisba, daughter of General Hasdrubal, who hath preceded us."

"Greeting! a hearty greeting, Elissa, daughter of Hannibal! Greatly honoured am I that so beauteous a princess should deign to shed the light of her beauty upon our poor dwelling. Welcome art thou, ay, doubly art thou welcome, seeing that thou art the betrothed of our kinsman Maharbal." And he smiled pleasantly as he kissed her hand. "Welcome to thee also, oh Sophonisba; truly so fair a flower as thou hath never yet blossomed in the gardens of Syphax. Would to the gods that it might take root upon our Numidian soil, then would

the palace doors be bright, and the hearts of the people happy."

With this gallant speech, and with open admiration in his eyes, the Numidian king bent over and kissed in turn the hand of the charming and deeply blushing Sophonisba. Then he ordered the litter to be lowered from the shoulders of the gorgeously-attired bearers, and personally assisted the maidens to alight.

Elissa was attired with great splendour, much after the fashion in which she had been clothed upon the occasion when she descended to the harbour some years before to meet the false Adherbal, and was looking radiant. Sophonisba was also charmingly attired, but somewhat more simply, as became her years.

All present upon the verandah were struck by the regal splendour of Elissa, and the sweet charm of the fair maiden, Sophonisba, whose supple, willowy form was set off to the greatest advantage by the simple style of her raiment.

When they had been conducted up the marble steps by Syphax, he in turn presented to the ladies first his nephew Massinissa, then all the nobles of his court. After them he presented to Elissa the young Roman noble Scipio, with the nobility of whose features Hannibal's daughter was greatly impressed.

Publius Cornelius Scipio the younger, afterwards distinguished, on account of his feats on Libyan soil, by the surname of Africanus, was by no means the stripling that he had been on the occasion of the rescue of his noble father from the hands of Maharbal and the butcher Monomachus. He was a stately and muscularly developed man, and, save for his temporary pallor, strong and athletic-looking. His features were extremely regular, his eyes blue, his hair light-brown and curling. He wore a short, fair beard, which was exceedingly becoming to him. There was an immense charm in his manner, as, indeed, his face seemed to proclaim.

As Elissa gazed for the first time upon this young man, whose advent in the world was to be so fateful for Hannibal

and for Carthage, she was struck by what she considered the goodness, although by no means weakness, of his expression.

Scipio, on his side, was for a second struck dumb by the magnificent and voluptuous beauty before him. Thus, for a second, the representatives of the two hostile nations remained speechless face to face in a sort of embarrassment.

The Numidian king, standing by, laughed heartily.

"Why, my young and noble guests, what is it? Are ye afraid of one another, or would ye continue the war upon Libyan soil? Nay, nay; here are ye on neutral ground, and let me assure thee, oh Scipio, that no war is allowed at the Court of Syphax, save the havoc which can be wrought by a beauteous maiden's eyes."

He spoke in Greek, in which language the young man, smiling in turn, replied, as stooping gracefully over Elissa's hand, he raised it to his lips:

"And that is a war in which the lady Elissa hath already won the victory. Alas! I fear she will be ever fatal to the race of Scipio, whether in the field or in the court. In the former, if the voice of rumour be true, she hath already slain the uncle in well-contested battle by her feats of arms; and now, in the latter, she hath already half-slain the nephew with those far more potent weapons with which the gods on Olympus have endowed her. In sooth is she a most redoubtable foe."

"I render thee thanks, my lord Scipio. Here, beneath the hospitable roof-trees of King Syphax, thou hast not much to fear, at all events. For 'tis but a simple maiden, all unarmed and defenceless, that thou seest before thee, and no thought hath she in her heart of warfare of any description. Therefore, see thou to it, my lord, that thou provoke not the battle."

Elissa smiled, displaying her pearly teeth as she uttered these words, and as she stood thus, her crimson lips slightly parted, and a faint flush upon her peach-like cheek, she appeared to the already enamoured young Roman as the terrestial personification of Venus the queen of love herself.

"Most excellent!" quoth King Syphax smilingly; "'tis good advice which thou hast given unto our noble Roman

guest, for were I in his place I would fly at once rather than risk an encounter in which defeat were assured in advance."

Then he turned and left them, hurrying off to the side of Sophonisba, who was shyly responding to the advances of the the Prince Massinissa, to whom she had taken an instinctive dislike, mingled with a feeling of dread.

For the man had snaky black eyes and a cruel look, as different from the honest and open countenance of his uncle as are the sulphurous fumes of Erebus from the heavenly lights of Elysium. Sophonisba turned to her host gladly as he came to her side, and listened willingly to his kindly and, it must be owned, somewhat amorous conversation, Massinissa effacing himself as his uncle appeared upon the scene. For of him he stood in dread, and likewise hated him cordially, simply for the reason that he had once been detected in plotting against his life, and had most magnanimously been forgiven. For 'tis ever the way with traitors to hate those whom they have wronged, but by whose benefits they are nevertheless not ashamed to profit.

During the ensuing weeks all was merriment at the court of Syphax. The affairs of the two separate embassies were entirely neglected, for the king knew full well that no sooner should he come to a determination with either one power or the other to make an alliance, than the representatives of both would leave. Therefore, being a man of most jovial disposition, and likewise of a most hospitable turn of mind, he, on one pretext or another, constantly put off all business discussions until the morrow. Thus, both the embassies were forced to remain, awaiting the time when the Numidian king should find leisure to discuss the important affairs of State, which, however decided, would inevitably plunge his dominions and forces, now at peace, into all the horrors of war.

In the meantime, the days were passed in the pleasures of the chase, and the nights in feasting and carousal. The country abounded in game of all descriptions, from the lordly lion to the fierce wild boar and the timorous deer.

The former was hunted from the backs of elephants and

slain with arrows and darts; the wild boar was pursued on horseback and slain by the riders with their darts and javelines; the deer were killed by the use of the bow alone, the hunters being concealed in passes in the hills, or glades in the forests, towards which the quarry was driven. It was in the pursuit of the wild boar that Elissa shone, for here her magnificent horsemanship and skill in discharging her weapons while at full gallop came chiefly into play. There were other ladies present at the court, many of them of great beauty, but after the arrival of the Carthaginian mission, Syphax was during these hunting parties never to be found by the side of any save Sophonisba; while, where Elissa was, Scipio, whose arm was soon healed, was ever in close attendance.

One day while pursuing the boar, Elissa, being magnificently mounted, had far outstripped all the other riders. She overtook the boar, and casting a javeline, struck the animal behind the shoulder. The infuriated brute turned instantly and charged her borse, which fell headlong, casting its rider heavily to the ground. The boar, after venting its rage upon the prostrate horse, whom with its savage tusks it utterly destroyed, attempted to trot off, but fell down dead close by.

Scipio, was the only one of the hunters who, save Elissa, had in the bushy country managed to follow the chase. He came upon the body of the horse, the now lifeless boar, and the seemingly lifeless form of Elissa, all three close together. When she came partly to her senses again, she found herself closely clasped in the arms of the young Roman warrior. His lips were upon her lips, his breath mingled with her breath; her senses had not yet completely come back to her, she was in a dream. Passionately he clasped her to his bosom; wildly too, in a paroxysm of grief, he cried:

"Die not, beloved, for oh, I love thee—I love thee, Elissa! Say, dost thou love me?"

"Ay," she replied, with swimming eyes; "ay, I love thee, and that right truly—Maharbal!"

Then she closed her eyes once more, and became again insensible in the arms of Scipio.

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Young Scipio, gnashing his teeth with rage, laid her inert body on the ground. Then he rode off, and finding some of the beaters, told them to seek her and bring her back to the palace. He himself, cursing the very name of Maharbal, rode moodily home, avoiding the remainder of the hunting party, whom he observed in the distance.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE BRINK.

When we last left Maharbal upon the shores of the Adriatic he was a prey to great sorrow at the loss of his dear friend Mago. But soon he had no time for any personal feelings, for the army was once more in motion. Hannibal ever mindful of his dream, proceeded to follow out the plan that the dream had suggested, namely, the devastation of Italy. Accordingly, ever leaving a destroyed territory in his wake, he marched onward and southward. Every village that he came across he pillaged and burned, every town or walled city that he met he laid siege to, captured, and destroyed. It was not a part of his plan of campaign to allow his followers to hamper themselves with the quantities of female slaves that they took prisoners, as there could be no means of exportation for them. Therefore, merely delaying for a few days' repose after the capture of each place, he caused the army to relinquish all the women they had taken, and so to march on, ever forward, unhampered save by the enormous booty they had acquired.

The power of Rome having been apparently paralysed, he, for a considerable space, wandered whither he would, utterly unopposed. Having traversed, from end to end, the countries of Picenum, Campania, Samnium, and Apulia; having for months and months devastated all the richest country in Italy, under the very eyes of the following force of Romans, under the Dictator Fabius, surnamed Cunctator or the Lingerer, he seized upon and carried by assault the citadel and town of Cannæ, where there was an immense store of provisions and materials of war belonging to the Romans. There he rested

for a time, and armed all his Libyan infantry with Roman armour and Roman weapons. What a delight must not the Carthaginian chief have felt, as he dealt out by the thousand to his followers the suits of armour that he had taken from the Roman warriors even in their own country. He now had, however, not only the most absolute confidence in himself and his mission, but a sarcastic delight in thus arming his forces with Roman harness to fight against the Romans themselves. And this feeling was shared by the men of mixed nationalities in his army, who, with feelings of triumph, arrayed themselves in the trappings of the enemy whom they were commencing to despise.

Meanwhile, the members of the Senate at Rome were tearing their hair. They determined that an effort must be made, and this puny invader, who, with such a ridiculously small force, had dared to affront all the might of Rome, must be crushed forthwith. Despite, therefore, the previous disasters, they girt their loins together most manfully, and prepared for new and more determined efforts to wipe Hannibal and all his crew off the face of the earth.

What the power of the Roman Senate, what the resolution of the Roman people must have been, is exemplified by the fact that, despite previous losses, they soon had in the field an army amounting in number to more than four times the usual annual levy of legions. For it consisted, counting horse and foot, of nearly ninety-eight thousand men! And the Dictator, the lingerer Fabius, having been proved a failure, and he and his master of the horse, and sometimes co-dictator, Minucius, having been repeatedly defeated in various small actions and skirmishes, this enormous force was placed under the command of the two new consuls for the year, Paullus Æmilius, and Terentius Varro, the former being a patrician of great fame, the latter a popular demagogue of plebeian origin. had already greatly distinguished himself in the Illyrian war, for which he had celebrated a splendid triumph; but as for Varro, he was, although the representative of the people, nothing but a vulgar and impudent bully, with no other knowledge of war than his own unbounded assurance. Hannibal, with his usual military genius, had seized upon the citadel of Cannæ, these two consuls, burning to retrieve the frequent recent disasters, arrived upon the scene and took over the command. But after all that had gone before, they were not sure of themselves, and therefore persuaded the out-going consuls. Cnœus Servilius and Marcus Atillus, to remain and join in the battle. Marcus Minucius likewise, who had been co-dictator with Fabius, returned to the army to take part in the great fight which, with all his rashness, he had not himself been able to precipitate during his own term of office, but which he knew to be imminent. He had already suffered a defeat at the hands of Hannibal, and was burning to gain his revenge. And now he knew that he had his chance against the comparatively small force of the presumptuous invader, for never, in all her history, had Rome put such an enormous army in the field.

Hannibal and his army were encamped upon some heights to the south of a river called the Aufidus. This stream was remarkable in one respect, it being the sole stream in the whole of Italia which flows through the range of the Apennine mountains, rising on their western side, passing through the hills, and falling into the Adriatic Sea on the eastern side of the Italian Peninsula. From the excellent situation of the Carthaginian camp, all the military dispositions of the Romans could be easily observed, and by means of the spies employed by old Sosilus, Hannibal was not long in being informed of the dissensions between the two consuls. Never was there an instance in which the disadvantage of a dual command was shown more than upon the present occasion, when one consul was in command of the whole force one day and the other the next, and what the one did to-day the other undid to-morrow. For it was the custom in the Roman army when both consuls were present to give to each the supreme command on alternate days. It was a wonder, however, that after the example of the co-dictators Fabius Cunctator and Marcus Minucius, who had found it an utter failure a short time before, that this system of daily alternate command had not been abandoned. For Fabius and Minucius had found it so unworkable that they had for a time divided the army into two, each taking his own half. And with his half only, having risked a battle, Minucius was utterly defeated owing to an ambush of cavalry prepared by Hannibal. The late Master of the Horse and his troops were, upon this occasion, only saved from utter destruction by the Lingerer setting his own half of the army in motion, and coming to his rash colleague's assistance in the nick of time, and checking the Carthaginian pursuit, with much loss to the triumphant Phoenician force. After that, Minucius had wisely resigned his right to the command, leaving the entire power in the hands of Fabius.

Hannibal, with some of his chief officers, was watching from his camp upon the hill the movements of the Roman army, a large portion of which could be seen crossing the river Aufidus to the northern side, where, at some distance from the river, a camp was being prepared for them by strong working parties, covered by large picquets and their supports. Meanwhile, a brisk conflict could be seen going on near the banks of the river, Hannibal having sent a large number of light-armed men and some cavalry to annoy the Romans by attacking their flank while on the line of march.

For a while this attack was successful, but suddenly the situation changed.

"Ha! General Hanno, seest thou that?" quoth Hannibal. "The Romans have, as far as I can see for the clouds of dust, altered the whole face of the action. Withdrawing their light-armed troops, they have now faced our men with large bodies of their heavy-armed hoplites. Ay, 'tis easy to see them now; they are issuing from the dust; there they are in three lines—the Hastati, the Principes, and the Triarii. And the Hastati are charging our men, who retreat in confusion. 'Tis true those tall black and purple plumes rising up from the crests of their helmets do give those heavy-armed Roman infantry a somewhat terrifying appearance. They still advance, I see, and in large numbers. Were it not the day for the command

of Æmilius, I should say that they were attempting to bring on a general engagement, and trying to draw me on to throw mine own heavy troops into the action also.

"But Æmilius is too cautious to fight, if he can avoid it, thus, with only part of his force, and it would be dark before he could bring the remainder of the army into action. The same applies to us. A battle this evening, therefore, can do neither of us any good. Therefore, the light-armed troops must even make good their retreat as they can. I wonder, though, what is the object of the Romans in thus weakening themselves by dividing their camp in two?"

"I think, my lord Hannibal, 'tis to annoy our foraging parties," replied Hasdrubal, formerly chief of the Pioneers, who had succeeded to the command of the heavy cavalry upon the departure of Mago. "'Tis either for that purpose, or to protect their own foraging parties from us."

"But 'twill not protect their watering parties," responded the Chief, "and, moreover, in this warm summer weather 'twill be a terrible thing for them if they get not water. I hold them now in the hollow of my hand, and can force on a general engagement when I choose, and that, too, upon ground of mine own choosing, and most favourable to cavalry. Tomorrow is, methinks, the day for the command of Terentius Varro, and him I can soon draw out, and so we will prepare the army for the battle to-morrow.

"What matter, if we have but forty thousand to their ninetyeight thousand? their very numbers will prove their great source of weakness, if I draw them, as I propose, into yonder ground below us within the loop formed by the double bend of the river. But thou wilt have a busy time with the heavy cavalry, General Hasdrubal, and upon thee in a great measure will depend to-morrow the fate of the whole battle—ay, the fate of Carthage or of Rome."

"I am ready, my lord," answered the ex-chief of the Pioneers simply. "And if I fall, there are plenty of other good men and true among mine officers to succeed me in carrying out thine orders."

"Good! Now, my generals, as I perceive that the Romans are no longer pursuing our light-armed troops, but have resumed their order of march, we need remain here no longer. Hath General Maharbal returned from the skirmish yet? If not, we will await him."

"Nay, my lord, thither he cometh," and the enormous form of the young general, towering above a small surrounding group of the Numidian cavalry, could be seen issuing from the clouds of dust upon the Roman flank. He had been covering, as far as lay in his power, the retreat of the light-armed footmen, and was now retiring leisurely, while directing his troops to pick up and bring in all the wounded they could find.

Presently he returned to the camp and joined the group of generals, in a very bad humour at this small reverse. Hannibal addressed him.

"Well, Maharbal! so thy forces were driven back, were they?"

"Yea, verily were they, Hannibal; and that for want of due support," answered Maharbal testily, while removing his helmet and wiping the sweat and dust from his face.

"Which support thy commander ought to have given thee, eh? and so brought on a general action just about nightfall. "Twould have been truly most wise. What! hast thou not slain enough of the Romans? And yet, methinks, 'tis something more than red paint that I see upon thy hand." Hannibal smiled at the evident ill-humour of his beloved lieutenant, and continued: "Blood, Maharbal! thou shalt have Roman blood enough to-morrow; and I pray the gods that thine own be not shed. But now shalt thou have wine; thou must be sorely thirsty."

"Thirsty—ay! I could drink up the river Aufidus," responded Maharbal, smiling, for his ill-humour had vanished completely at the kindly words of his chief.

"Then come to my tent, lad, and ye also, my generals; and while Maharbal taketh his well-deserved refreshment, I will, with pen and ink, demonstrate unto ye all the plans I have conceived for to-morrow's action, and the part which will fall unto each of ye therein."

After the council of war Hannibal called his senior general

"Now, Hanno, it will, lest the troops be depressed by today's slight reverse, be as well for me to address them. Be so good as to parade troops from all the different forces. As I cannot address the whole army, I wish to have as many representatives as possible present from each arm. Form them up into a hollow square, as many files deep as possible, leaving only room for me and mine interpreters in the centre, and a small lane, two files in width, through which I can ride in."

All was soon done as directed, and then Hannibal addressed the army as follows:

"First, give thanks to the gods, for they have brought the enemy into this country because they design the victory for us. And next to me, for having compelled the enemy to fight-for they cannot avoid it any longer—and to fight in a place so full of advantages for us. But I do not think it becoming in me now to use many words in exhorting you to be brave and forward in this battle. When you had no experience of fighting the Romans, this was necessary, and I did then suggest many arguments and examples to you. But now, seeing that you have undeniably beaten the Romans in three successive battles of such magnitude, what arguments could have greater influence with you in confirming your courage than the actual facts? Now, by your previous battles, you have got possession of the country and all its wealth in accordance with my promises, for I have been absolutely true in everything I have ever said to you. But the present contest is for the cities and the wealth in them; and, if you win it, all Italy will be at once in your power; and, freed from your present hard toils, and masters of the wealth of Rome, you will, by this battle, become the leaders and lords of the world. This, then, is a time for deeds, not words; and, by the blessing of the gods, I am persuaded that I shall carry out my promises to you forthwith."

These encouraging words were received with tumultuous shouts and cheers by the many who heard them, and even those who were not actually present, learning from their com-

rades what Hannibal had said, had their spirits greatly raised, and became full of confidence for the morrow.

It was in this manner that Hannibal ofttimes inspired his men. He fulfilled his promises to them, and never asked them to face a danger or a hardship which he was not ready to share himself, even as were he a mere private soldier, instead of being the great commander, the head and brains of the whole army, the wonder of the world.

CHAPTER XIV.

CANNÆ.

THE battle was not until two days later, for Hannibal had been mistaken in imagining on the previous day that Paullus Æmilius had been in command, since it had been Varro.

On the morning that Hannibal wished to fight, he drew up his army in battle array, but Æmilius, not being satisfied with his ground, which he clearly saw was far too favourable to the enemy's cavalry, declined to come out of camp, and Hannibal, therefore, marched his men in again. He revenged himself, however, by despatching his cavalry to cut off the Roman watering parties that evening. Again, on the following morning, he sent the cavalry to prevent the Roman watering parties from approaching the stream. And this time, being sure of his man, Hannibal knew that he would not have long to wait, and so once more he drew up his troops in battle array and expected Varro. Terentius Varro, who had been furious the day before at his colleague's delay, and was irritated beyond measure at the insolence of the Carthaginian horse in attacking his water parties, instantly put his forces in motion. a nest of hornets the vast army issued from the two camps. the larger force on the south side joining the troops from the lesser camp on the north side of the river. And soon he had no less than eight thousand horse and eighty thousand infantry men in line face to face with Hannibal's thirty thousand. Varro had left ten thousand more men in camp, with instructions to attack the Carthaginian camp during the battle; but Hannibal, ever wide awake, foresaw this move, and had also left ten thousand in his camp to resist any such enterprise.

What a magnificent sight must have been those two huge

armies, the Romans considerably more than double the Carthaginians, in battle array, and facing each other, before the commencement of one of the most awful combats that the world has ever known—the terrible battle of Cannæ!

Hannibal had crossed to the north side of the river into the loop already mentioned, and had thrown out to the front, in skirmishing order, his Balearic slingers and spearmen; the Romans had likewise covered their front with their light-armed men. Thus the action began by the engagement of the skirmishers with each other. Meanwhile, the two armies, taking no part in this combat, remained face to face.

While they are waiting thus, we may as well take a glance at the mutual dispositions of the two armies, beginning with that of Hannibal. He, facing northward, had the horse of his right wing resting on the right bend of the river, and the horse on the left wing resting on the left bend of the river, while the back of the whole of his force was to the river also.

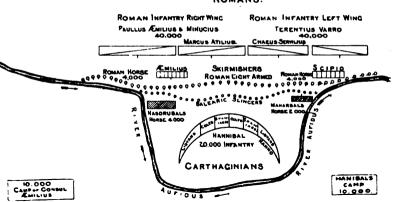
The Romans, seeing that glittering stream flowing thus in rear of their foe on every side, confidently reckoned upon soon turning it into a river of Carthaginian blood. With this object they massed their maniples closer than usual, and to double the usual depth. The Roman forces even then considerably overlapped the Carthaginian army on both sides of the loop, the river thus protecting both Hannibal's flanks for him, as he had intended that it should:

But the Romans imagined that by the sheer weight of their thousands of heavy-armed infantry thus massed together they would forcibly sweep the Carthaginian foot clean off the plain and into the river behind them. And so, no doubt, they would have done, had it not been for the skilful disposition that Hannibal had made of his own infantry, which utterly frustrated their intention. For he had massed the whole of his heavy infantry in the centre of the plain in the form of the crescent moon, the convex side being towards the enemy and the thinner parts, the horns, bending backwards on each flank towards the river. It was an enormous crescent, certainly, and very thick in the centre, which, being composed of alternate



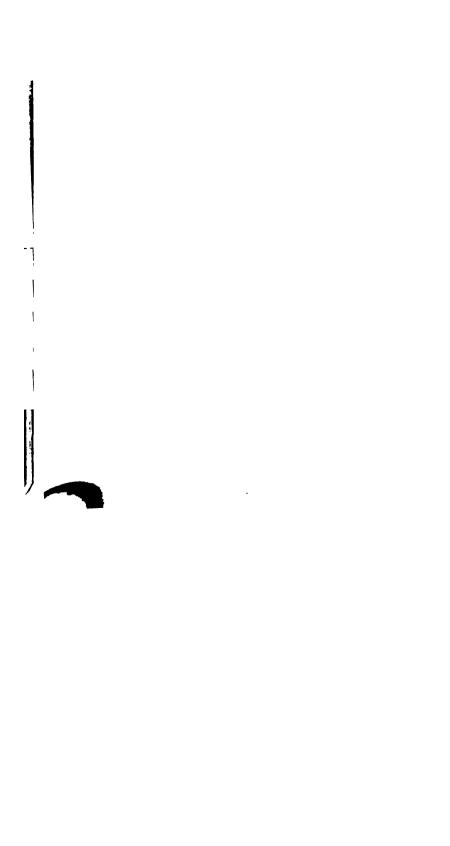


ROMANS.



BATTLE FIELD OF CANNÆ AT COMMENCEMENT OF THE ACTION

Showing the distribution and Number of the Various Troops Engaged



companies of Iberians and Gauls, was intended to bear the brunt of the first part of the hand to hand fighting. Of these the Iberian infantry wore short white linen tunics, bordered with purple stripes; but the Gauls were naked to the waist. The Iberians had Roman swords, which could thrust as well as cut: while the Gauls were armed with huge weapons, meant for cutting only. Both Iberians and Gauls had a serviceable The flanks of this enormous crescent were composed shield. of the staunch Libyan infantry, whom Hannibal wished to reserve to the last. They were all armour-clad, and their armour having been captured at Thrasymene, armed identically with the Romans opposed to them, namely, with throwing spears, sword, and shield. The appearance of this motley mass of soldiers of three nations must have been equally terrible and frightening to the Romans as was the appearance of the Roman infantry with their tall, waving plumes to the Carthaginians. Hannibal stationed himself with the centre of the crescent to lead it into action, while Hanno commanded under him. All of the heavy Libvan and Iberian horse on the left were under the command of Hasdrubal, and all the Numidian light horse on the right were under Maharbal's orders as usual.

The Romans had placed their cavalry in front of their flanks. Paullus Æmilius was in command of the right wing, Terentius Varro of the left, while the two consuls of the previous year commanded the centre. These were Cnœus Servilius and Marcus Atillus, who had gallantly volunteered to remain with the army and fight under their successors. Minucius and young Scipio were respectively with the horse on the Roman right and left wing.

It was a glorious morning in the beginning of August, and the grass upon the plain near the river bank, that was so soon to be crimson with blood or hidden by the heaped-up corpses, was all emerald green, and studded with daisies and buttercups, wild campion and meadow-sweet. The blackbirds and thrushes were merrily singing away in the branches of the occasional plane trees, while, as the several parties of skirmishers advanced upon each other, coveys of young partridges, or small flocks of quail, rose before them with a whirring sound, and, frightened by the lines of glittering spears, and the dazzling gleam of the armour to be seen in all directions, flew frequently over the heads of the opposing forces, the men in jest striking at them with their spears. In the same way the hares, of which there were a great number on the plain, being alarmed by the skirmishers, ran among the feet of the men of the two armies, for there was no exit for them. And the thousands of men, while standing thus and waiting to engage in mortal combat, amused themselves by capturing the timid animals rushing between their legs.

A lovely morning indeed it was, with fur and feather of animal life moving in all directions around. And yet it was a day consecrated to the slaughter, not of mere game, but of man himself—and what a slaughter! For who ever heard of such a battle as that of the battle of Cannæ?

As has been said, Hasdrubal was in command of the heavy Iberian and Celtic cavalry on the left. Now old Sosilus, who was on the field, as usual making notes, had attached himself to this force, and as Polybius learned from him, and recorded later, there was soon some grand fighting on the left wing. For no great results transpired, nor were they expected from the fighting of the light-armed troops. Hasdrubal, therefore, set his cavalry in motion! They were no less than eight thousand in number, and soon, with many a warlike shout, they were thundering over the plain to charge the Roman cavalry, chiefly composed of knights and senators, in front of the Roman right With these were not only the ex-dictator Minucius, but the Consul Paullus Æmilius, who led them in person. now the account of what happened as given by the worthy Sosilus to the historian Polybius is very pretty and very graphic. He related it much in the following words:

As soon as the Iberian and the Celtic cavalry got at the Romans, the battle began in earnest, and in the true barbaric fashion, for there was none of the usual formal advance and retreat. When they got to close quarters, they grappled man

to man, and dismounting from their horses fought on foot, and when the Carthaginians had got the upper hand in this encounter, and killed most of their opponents on the ground, because the Romans all maintained the fight with spirit and determination, they began chasing the remainder along the river, slaying as they went, and giving no quarter. Then the legionaries took the place of the light-armed and closed with the enemy, that is, the Roman infantry attacked the Carthaginian infantry.

For a short time the Gallic and Iberian lines stood their ground and fought gallantly, but presently overpowered by the weight of the heavy-armed Romans, they gave way and retired to the rear, thus breaking up the crescent. The Roman maniples followed with spirit, and cut their way through the enemy's line, and closed up from the wings towards the centre, the principal point of danger. The two Carthaginian wings did not come into action at the same time as the centre, because the Iberians and Gauls, being stationed on the arc of the crescent, had come into contact with the enemy long before the wings.

The Romans, however, going hastily in pursuit of these troops and closing towards their own centre, now fell into the trap that Hannibal had designed for them. For the Libvan troops that he had placed on either flank now wheeled inwards. the left flank wheeling to the right and attacking the Roman right flank, and the Libyans on the right wheeling in a similar manner to the left and falling upon the Romans' left. the Romans fought bravely, facing outwards; but owing to their numbers, they were so crowded together that they got none of the advantages that those numbers should have given them, for only the outer files could fight. Now Æmilius had been with the cavalry on the left, and fought most manfully against the charge of Hasdrubal; but although severely wounded, after the cavalry reverse, seeing that the decision of the battle rested chiefly on the legionaries, he rode up to the centre of the line and led the charge himself, cheering on and exhorting his men.

Hannibal on the other side did the same, for, as already stated, he had taken his place in the centre from the commencement. Meanwhile the Numidian horse on the right under Maharbal were repeatedly charging the cavalry on the Roman left, and although by their peculiar mode of fighting they neither gave nor received much harm, they rendered them useless by keeping them constantly employed, charging first on one side and then on the other. And now Hasdrubal behaved splendidly and with most soldierly judgment. he rode along the whole rear of the Romans, attacked with a murderous charge the cavalry force under young Scipio, and with which Maharbal was engaged, and having entirely broken them up, left Maharbal and his Numidians to pursue. He himself returned to the rear of the Roman centre, and then hurled the whole of his heavy cavalry upon the rear of the legionaries in a most fearful rush, the charge being delivered at full gallop. The shock was terrible, and the result upon the Romans most disastrous. And now all their cavalry being defeated, with the heavy cavalry on their rear and the heavyarmed Libyans on both flanks, the Iberians and Gauls having moreover rallied on their front, the wretched Romans were enclosed on every side. So closely were they jammed together that they could not even draw their swords. And thus a fearful slaughter of the Romans set in, and the massacre continued for no less than eight hours. For the outer ranks being constantly mown down in succession, the Carthaginians gradually fought their way over the piles of corpses from all sides towards the centre, and thus, powerless to resist the Romans were cut down like penned-up sheep by thousands where they stood. The Carthaginian heavy cavalry, being no longer able to urge their horses onward over the piles of the armoured dead, dismounted and continued steadily fighting their way on foot to the centre from the rear.

While this terrible carnage was going on, Hannibal had not been unmindful of his camp, upon which a most determined attack was being made by the ten thousand Romans who had been left in their own camp for the purpose. Seeing that he had now enclosed the legionaries so that they could not get out, and half of them being slain already, and the other half with horror in their eyes waiting their inevitable turn to die, he now took away as many troops as he could spare from the slaughter. Recrossing the River Aufidus, which was not soiled by the blood of a single Carthaginian soldier, after all the men had taken a refreshing drink of the pure water, Hannibal led them up the hill to the rescue of his camp. Here he arrived in the very nick of time, for the garrison were, after a prolonged and spirited resistance, just beginning to waver. Now, however, the Romans found themselves between two forces, and in consequence the ten thousand, or such as survived of them, not wishing to be all killed to a man, as they could see was happening across the river to their comrades, laid down their arms and surrendered themselves as prisoners.

In addition to those taken prisoners, the Romans that day lost no less than seventy thousand in killed. For the Carthaginians slew and slew until they were too weary to strike any longer, and thus at length, of the ninety-eight thousand horse and foot who went into action, either in the big battle or in the fighting round the camp, a miserable remnant of some ten thousand only in all struggled through by degrees to the town of Canusium.

Meanwhile, Maharbal, who had long continued the pursuit and slaughter of the Roman cavalry, returned. He had, comparatively early in the fight, severely wounded young Scipio in the side and in the left arm. It was while he was, with his two thousand Numidians, keeping occupied a vastly superior number of the enemy, that Scipio had boldly ridden forth, and, for the third time in this history, challenged Maharbal to single combat.

The young Roman's bravery was great, but neither in strength nor in dexterity was he a match for the Numidian, who wounded and unhorsed him after a short hand-to-hand combat, in which Maharbal himself received a trivial wound on the wrist at Scipio's first violent onslaught. Scipio was overthrown and cast to the ground, his sword falling from his hand. Mahas-

bal leaped to the ground after him and secured the sword.

"Now, Scipio," he said, holding the point of the blade at his prostrate antagonist's throat, "could I slay thee with thine own weapon; but I will not, but spare thee even on this the third occasion, as on the two former ones, merely on account of thy bravery. Rise, therefore, and take thy sword and thy horse, and see to it that in the future ye meddle no more with Maharbal the son of Manissa, for thou art by no means any match with him. Fight thou with thine equals!" He helped the wounded warrior on to his horse again. "Now go thou forth," he said disdainfully, "and see to it that ye trouble me no more."

And thus he drove off Scipio with scorn, as though a whipped cur, from before his face.

A few days later that same sword came in useful for Scipio in preserving the honour of Rome. For with its blade bared, he rushed in among a body of nobles who had escaped from Cannæ, and were about to fly beyond the seas. And he swore that with it he would slay anyone who would not bind himself not to desert his country.

Meanwhile, as we have said, Maharbal was returning with his men from the pursuit, and carefully threading his way across that terrible plain, whereon of the Roman leaders, Minucius and all of the consuls, except Varro, who escaped to Canusium, lay dead. Seventy thousand corpses lay there, with pale faces and glazed, staring eyes turned up to the skies, many of them displaying bleeding, ghastly wounds as they lay in pools of blood. Horses, either dead or dying, were strewn all over the plain, having in many instances imprisoned beneath them in their fall some wounded warrior, whose agonised face bespoke his misery and fear as he saw the dreaded Numidians approaching. But they left all such to die a lingering death.

"The might of Rome is crushed! ay, absolutely crushed for ever!" exclaimed Maharbal to Cheeras by his side, and cros-

sing the Aufidus, he galloped up the hill to where he perceived Hannibal on horseback outside the camp.

"Hannibal, I salute thee, Conqueror of Rome!" he cried, and he flung himself from his horse and grasped his general's hand. "Hannibal, for ever more the might of Rome is crushed! Send thou me on with the cavalry, do thou follow behind, and in five days thou shalt sup in the Capitol!"

Hannibal warmly returned his friend's pressure, but made no reply.

END OF PART III.

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

On the morning after the great battle, the wearied troops were occupied in pillaging the bodies of the slain. together the golden rings of the fallen Roman knights, they collected four or five bushels, of which three bushels were sent to Carthage, and poured out before the Hundred on the floor of the Senate house. The number of Roman Eagles taken, and also forwarded to Carthage, was incredible. At the same time Hannibal sent an urgent demand for reinforcements in elephants, men, and money, since for three years, from the day he had marched out from Saguntum, he had contrived, by his wonderful ability and skill, to make his army entirely selfsupporting, replacing his losses in men by levies of Gauls. and paying the troops with the pillage of captured towns and cities. Unfortunately for Carthage, the Hundred did not listen to his Had they but done so at this juncture, Carthage and not Rome might have become the conqueror of all the The Phœnician Senators foolishly then known world. considered that if Hannibal had in the past, with the assistance of mere Gauls, been able to win such astounding successes as the Trebia, Thrasymene, and Cannæ, he might still very well continue to shift for himself.

They imagined that by making levies among the Italian colonies of Rome, or in the semi-independent Greek cities, in the provinces of Calabria, Lucania, and Bruttium, Hannibal

would still be able to obtain for himself the supplies that he needed, whether of men or money. Further, they imagined that, with the reinforcements thus obtained, he would be able They were not to continue his unbroken career of success. far wrong in their estimate of his indomitable will, for he did act much in this manner. But the Carthaginians, instead of assisting the world's greatest commander, when he earnestly asked for assistance, shamefully refused to listen to his demands. They sent reinforcements, under Mago, to Spain, and a large fleet and land forces as well under another general to Sicily, in neither of which places was there at the time any great urgency. Hannibal himself, with only half of the men that were denied him, would, after Cannæ, once and for all have conquered not only the Romans, as he had already done repeatedly, but also the city of Rome itself.

While the army were pillaging the thousands of dead, Hannibal and Maharbal were walking about among the corpses on the battle-field, trying to pick out the bodies of the commanders, and to see which of the consuls were slain. They could not ride, for the now stiffened bodies, encased in armour, tripped up the horses. Thus the whole day was passed in climbing and scrambling over the heaps of slain, and in tumbling about over the thousands of shields, spears, and swords, thrown wildly about by the dying warriors in all directions, the points of spears or their hafts sticking up everywhere. It was a most perilous journey over the battle-field, for some of the metal shields were lying face uppermost, with the centre boss, upon which was a sharp point used for striking, most inconveniently pointing upwards. Others, again, were downwards, which made it difficult to avoid getting the feet caught in the straps. But perhaps the worst of all were those jammed edgeways between the stiffened corpses.

"May the curse of all the Roman gods light upon these Roman shields!" cried Hannibal, as, catching his shin upon the edge of one of them, he pitched headlong. It so happened that he fell upon a corpse clad in magnificent armour.

"I have got a severer wound from a dead Roman's shield

to-day than I received from any live Roman's sword yesterday. See ye here, Maharbal!"

And, seating himself upon the corpse, for they were here so thick that he could not sit elsewhere, he held up his leg to the Numidian. The shin was barked and bleeding where it had been scraped. Maharbal laughed:

"A Roman dead, oh Hannibal, is sometimes apparently more dangerous than a Roman living. I also got a nasty scratch just now from a spear point. I think we shall be lucky when we get out again from this sea of corpses. 'Tis fortunate the blood hath dried up, or mostly sunk into the soil, or we could not move a step. I am most weary." And Maharbal in turn sunk down upon the piled-up heaps of dead, observing carefully the while the features of the dead Roman knight upon whom Hannibal was resting while nursing his damaged shin.

"Dost thou see upon whom thou art sitting, Hannibal? Thou hast met him before, but not as now. He was more active the last time."

Glancing round, the chief looked at the dead face.

"Marcus Minucius! by Melcareth! the co-dictator with Quintus Fabius, who did once snatch him from my very hands even when we were face to face. Well, we will give him an honourable burial, and I will no longer sit, like Monomachus at the crossing of the Rhodanus, upon his corpse, for he was, although too rash, a most brave and honourable soldier."

And Hannibal shifted his seat to another body.

"Hannibal!" quoth Maharbal, "while sitting by the corpse of Minucius, reflect how fatal for Rome hath been the policy of his colleague, the lingerer—Fabius, which hath in the end only resulted in all this carnage. Wilt thou not, after thy glorious success, rather emulate the rashness of this Minucius, and let me instantly make a dash with all the cavalry for the city of Rome, which will be in a terrible state of panic when the news of this battle arrives? I may even be able to force my way into the town before any fugitives bring the news, and then, seizing the gates, can hold them until thou arrive in person with thine army, that is, with all the infantry."

"I would that I could let thee go," quoth Hannibal, "but 'twould be useless. See the distance. There is all Apulia to be crossed, and all Samnium likewise. Then, again, the enormous province of Latium is to be traversed ere Rome be reached. Thou mightest get there, 'tis true: but with all this enormous spoil to be gathered and placed in the Citadel of Cannæ, of which I will form an arsenal, I could not march to-day or to-morrow. And even ere thou couldst get there thyself, the gates would be shut. Every man and boy in the whole of the enormous city will soon be in arms. They will not be many of them trained soldiers, 'tis true, but consider the city's defences! How canst thou with thy cavalry alone break down the massive walls? The place can only be taken by a regular siege. And I cannot before the reinforcements for which I am writing earnestly arrive, invest so large a city with any hopes of success by starvation. For we have lost ourselves at least five thousand five hundred men in this action, and we have as many thousand wounded. Nay, let us wait for the new troops which will doubtless arrive in a short space from Carthage, then we will at once invest and storm the 'Tis impracticable at present, absolutely, believe me, city. lad."

"Hannibal, thou art a great general and I am but thy servant. There is none like unto thee to win a victory, but, by the gods! thou dost not know how to profit by thy victory when won, or else wouldst thou let me go—ay, allow me to start in an hour's time."

And, savagely in his disappointment, Maharbal kicked at an adjacent shield, making it ring like a bell.

Hannibal sprang to his feet.

"Maharbal, listen unto me! Thou art young and rash—ay, rash even as dead Minucius yonder. But on me alone depends the whole safety of the army, the whole honour of Carthage. By all the gods! were I to listen to mine own wishes in this matter, I would instantly do as thou dost suggest, for I long to follow thine advice, and make an instant dash for Rome. 'Tis, by Moloch, the greatest disappointment I have ever felt not to

be able to do so instantly; but, for all my wishing, I must not think of self alone in this matter, and prudence tells me plainly that 'tis not wise; therefore, regretfully—ay, with very deep regret—must I wait for the reinforcements from Carthage. Let us now go forward; 'tis useless our talking over the matter further—I am determined."

Alas, for Hannibal! those reinforcements never came. But still, he could not have added to his fame had they arrived, and had he then taken Rome. It is for the marvellous manner in which, for many years, he maintained himself in Italy without them that he is so justly famous.

But now we must leave him and Maharbal for a time, ever over-running the country, and capturing or receiving the submission of important Italian cities, such as Capua in Campania, where the inhabitants first smothered all the Romans in the public baths and then yielded; or of Greek cities such as Tarentum in Calabria, where the gates were opened to him through the treachery to Rome of two young hunters, and where Hannibal himself pulled all the beleagured Tarentine warships, under the very nose of the Romans, out of the harbour and overland across the isthmus. It is not our province here to give in detail the many Italian campaigns of Elissa's father and Elissa's lover, for we must see what Elissa herself is doing elsewhere.

CHAPTER II.

WIFE O'R MISTRESS.

WE left Hannibal's daughter at the Court of Syphax after a serious fall out boar-hunting, from the effects of which, however, she soon recovered.

The young ædile Scipio was now madly in love with her, and the very fact that she had, while apparently returning his embraces, called upon the hated name of Maharbal, made him all the more anxious to win her for himself. For if he had been three times worsted by Maharbal in the field, he was only all the more anxious to conquer him in the lists of love.

Elissa herself was, it must be owned, exceedingly attracted by the charm of the young Roman; and, still feeling very sore at the neglect of Maharbal, she let herself go rather more than she intended, and encouraged him considerably. At first she did so merely for amusement, thinking it a triumph to subjugate a Roman noble; and then she went on with the game because it pleased her, for Scipio was a most loveable man. Yet had Hannibal's daughter not the least idea of what her own feelings really were. She only knew that she was attracted by the young Roman, for she had, since her affair with Maharbal, so seldom met anyone of rank equal to her own to whom she could allow herself to be attracted, that she was no mistress in the arts of love-making, or allowing herself to be made love to. She, therefore, wondered if it were possible that this attraction could be more than a passing liking. She wondered again if it could be possible that this Roman, the enemy of her country, whom she now met daily as a friend in the intimacy of a foreign court, could ever become to her anything more than a friend. She did not know if she wished that he should do so; but she certainly knew that his presence gave her pleasure. Therefore, without arguing out the matter with herself too far, she took the pleasure of the moment.

Very early in their acquaintance, they found politics a dangerous subject. Therefore the old vexed questions of the rights of Rome to Sicily, or the rights of Carthage to Sardinia. the justification of the invasion of Libva by Regulus, or, in defiance of all treaties, the attack by Hannibal on Saguntum and his subsequent invasion of Italy, were entirely abandoned between them from a controversial standpoint. But as they were both educated in the art of war, all these incidents were discussed between them from their strategical aspects, and thrashed out to the full. Thus, as the daily gossip of the palace was soon exhausted, these two always had a mutual subject of conversation. But it was only natural that when a handsome young man and a handsome young woman were constantly together-and when, moreover, the latter had good grounds for believing that her lover was neglecting herstrategy sometimes was a subject that ceased to be referred to, and a softer theme engrossed the thoughts of both.

When Scipio, however, became ardent and made love to her, Elissa ever retired like a hermit crab within a shell, putting out a claw wherewith to give a little defensive pinch to keep at a distance the man who would explore too closely what the shell contained.

For thus have ever, since the beginning of the world, been the wiles of women.

The unfortunate Scipio, becoming more enamoured day by day, was by degrees almost driven to despair. Now, he had with him at the Court of Syphax his bosom friend, Caius Lelius, a man whose nature was much similar to his own. For Caius was brave to a degree, a splendid soldier, and sailor, too, for that matter, as his many naval exploits proved, yet he was gentle and kind, and altogether unspoiled by the rough manners of the camp.

Caius Lelius noticed with great concern the growing attach-

ment of his friend for the beautiful Carthaginian maiden. He was much attracted towards her himself, but his loyalty to his friend made him leave the field clear. Thus he never put himself forward in any way to gain the notice of Elissa, of whom he knew Scipio to be so much enamoured. On the other hand, he purposely devoted himself to some of the other beauteous maidens present at the Numidian Court. These were only too pleased to shower their favours upon him, for he was universally popular. Thus no party of pleasure, no joyous hunting-party or picnic, for they had picnics in those days even as now, was complete for the merry ladies of the Court of Syphax without the presence of the ever light-hearted Lælius. And Elissa herself knew full well the nobility of the young man, and was ever most courteous and friendly to him.

One day Lælius took his friend and chief to task.

"Scipio," quoth he, "in the name of all the gods of Olympus! what is this game that thou art playing with the daughter of Hannibal? Wouldst thou make of her thy mistress?"

Scipio flared out in a rage.

"Caius, thou and I have been friends from boyhood; but dare to utter such a suggestion again and I strike thee to the ground!" And he laid his hand upon his sword.

"By Cupid and Venus! 'tis more serious even than I imagined," replied his companion, laughing. "So thou wilt kill me—because of what? simply because being thy dearest friend I would see thee happy. Tut, tut, man, 'tis childish. I but meant to infer that 'twould be difficult for thee to make her thy wife, and if all that rumour says be true she hath already been the mistress of thine old enemy Maharbal, the Numidian, then why not thine? There is an old Roman saying that there are many women who have never had a lover; but there are none who remain with only one. Then why shouldst thou not succeed, especially in the absence of thy rival?"

"Simply because Elissa is far too noble-minded, and I myself would not take her so unless all other means failed.

But why should I not marry her, Lælius? It would be the best thing for both Rome and Carthage. For once she were my wife, how could the war continue? To make her so would be the greatest act of policy that hath ever been wrought since the commencement of the first Punic war. For Hannibal could no longer prosecute the war in Italy were his daughter the wife of Scipio. Neither could Hasdrubal nor Mago continue the war in Iberia against our legions were their niece to become my spouse. Only think of the thousands of lives that may be saved—the thousands of homesteads that may be spared from destruction, the cities that may never sustain a siege, the matrons and maidens that will never run the risk of violation or slavery, should the daughter of Hannibal become the wife of Scipio."

Lælius, carried away by these words, sprang up enthusiastically.

"By Jupiter and Juno! By Mars and Venus! 'tis true, Scipio! 'twould bring a lasting peace. Well, ask her straight out, and may all the gods speed thy wooing. For on this matter I now see well hangs a most notable crisis. If thou canst win her now, the war 'twixt Rome and Carthage will be staved. This Elissa is, in very truth, most wondrous beautiful, and once she were thy wife she would become a Roman. The world is quite big enough for Rome and Carthage together, therefore why should they not join hands? and, in sooth, what might we not do could we but form a combination? Think of it! Scipio, a combination between Rome and Carthage—Rome with all its glorious records of land victories, Carthage with its splendid fleets and immense naval power. Together we could conquer all the known and unknown worlds. 'Tis glorious. oh Scipio! I am with thee; there is my hand."

Scipio was about to reply.

"Nay, speak not yet," continued the other. "Think what we could win together. The League of the Achæans, the League of the Ætolians, the power of Macedon, the strength of Antiochus in Asia Minor, the pride of the Ptolemies in Egypt, all this together Carthage and Rome can subdue. And the

honest love of a man for a maiden may accomplish all this. And a most glorious maiden is she, too. For whether or no she hath loved this Numidian Maharbal, there never yet was in this world such a woman as this Elissa, so strong is she in herself, so beautiful and so powerful. Make her thy wife, Scipio; then shall Rome and Carthage together conquer and reign supreme over all the world. Now, I leave thee."

Gripping his friend's hand warmly, Caius Lælius turned and left him. Every word that he had said was true: the whole future fate of the world depended upon that infinitesimal part of the world contained in one tiny unit—the body of one fair woman.

CHAPTER III.

FIGHTING WITH FATE.

THERE was a cool and refreshing northern breeze wafted off the seas when one morning the young warrior Scipio persuaded the Carthaginian maid to accompany him on horseback to a green, palm-studded headland stretching far out into the sea. Having dismounted and left their steeds with some slaves, the twain wandered on until they came to a sort of cave.

It was a natural archway overhung with wild fig and caper bushes, and having an aspect towards the delightfully blue waters of the Mediterranean. There had once been a temple to some god or goddess at the spot, and they seated themselves upon a fallen column in the recess. This was shaded by overhanging and luxuriant tufts of dew-bespangled maidenhair fern; it was, in fact, a most enchanting spot. Never was there such a glorious day; it was a day when merely to live was in itself an infinite joy. Across the sea could be scen, a hundred miles away, the faint outline of the Spanish land in a radiant haze, while close at hand, the rock-doves uttered cooing notes of love.

Placing his arm round Elissa's shoulder and drawing her face near to his own, Scipio spoke.

"Elissa, thou canst see in the far distance the headlands showing; they are the coasts of Iberia. But what thou canst not see is the future of the world, and that thou hast it in thine own hands to shape that future now. Now, I can foresee much. And this I tell thee. I love thee, dear, and love thee deeply, and, wilt thou but give me thy love in return, thy

nation and mine can conquer the world together. But before all I ask one thing, I ask thy love."

Elissa's heart beat fast. The memory of her own love, Maharbal, came to her mind. This man, this Scipio, told upon her strangely, yet could she not forget Maharbal. She remained silent, gazing over the sea and nervously twisting her fingers together.

"Canst thou not love me?" Scipio asked, as he rose and confronted her, capturing and holding her not altogether unvielding fingers in his own strong grasp. "Look out, dear one, over the seas; all those seas may be ours. Watch those far distant headlands. They now belong to Carthage, 'tis true, but they will, should thou not accede unto my prayer, most undoubtedly one day belong to Rome. Yet, give me but thy love, thy hand, and together, thou and I, will conquer and rule the world, and Rome and Carthage will be one alone."

Bending low, he kissed her hands with gentle kisses, stealing all along from finger-tips to wrist. Still she remained silent, lost in deepest thought. For she was thinking of her country and her past.

After a period of thought she suddenly threw his hands from her.

"And Maharbal?" she exclaimed, "what share is he to have in this ruling of the world?"

The young Roman had not expected this.

"Maharbal!" he answered scornfully, "what share can such a one as Maharbal have in the universal dominion that I propose to thee shouldst thou but unite thy lot with mine? Maharbal, if he be not already dead, can still continue his career as a bold cavalry leader; but what can he do for the world save send many men out of it before their time? 'Tis out of place, methinks, to talk of Maharbal when the future of nations is at stake, and all dependeth but on thee and me."

Elissa sprung to her feet in turn, and looked Scipio straight in the eyes.

Laughing half scornfully, "Listen unto me," she said, "oh Scipio. Thou art but a boy for all thine exploits, and art carried

away partly by thine enthusiasm and partly by thy love of me. for which, believe me, I am truly grateful, for thou art indeed one worthy to be loved. Yet listen, thou art dreaming a dream which is impossible of completion. Thy union with me could never carry with it the weight that thou dost imagine. I. being Hannibal's daughter, should be hated by Rome. marriage would not be recognised; I should soon be reduced to the position of thy mere mistress. Rome and Carthage together would never conquer the world, for the sole object of each is to conquer the other, and thus the old racial hatred would never permit it. Could I for one instant believe that it could be so, I would, for my country's sake, and even in the interest of all humanity, throw over mine allegiance to Maharbal and give myself unto thee now. But I see it is but a dream, and, therefore, were there even no Maharbal in existencealthough my heart tells me that I should love thee and love thee dearly—yet would I not give myself unto thee. may not be; my natural intelligence persuades me that party feeling in Rome and Carthage, and mine own father's hatred of Rome, would never allow this glorious union between the two countries which thou hast most patriotically imagined. Therefore, Scipio, leave thou me for ever, for I can never be thine. Things being thus, I only belong to one man living. and to him I will be true."

Scipio stamped his foot with rage.

"Curse him!" he cried. "Curse him, by all the gods of Olympus and Hades! He needs must come between me and victory at every turn, and never more so than now. And thou art acting ill for thy country, Elissa; mark thou my word. Some day, moreover, in spite of this thrice-accursed Maharbal, thou shalt be mine whether thou wilt or no."

Elissa's colour rose, and she laughed at him.

"Thine! whether I wilt or no, my lord Scipio? Surely a somewhat presumptuous boast, seeing how my father Hannibal is slaying thy compatriots by tens of thousands in Italia, and how I myself have been present at the terrible discomfiture of thy relatives in Spain—a proud boast indeed. Thine,

figbting with fate.

indeed!" she added scornfully, "never while Maharbal exists will I be thine, unless thou capture me in honest war; but remember Hannibal's daughter is accustomed to warfare, and will not be easily taken, I assure thee."

"Nevertheless," responded Scipio sternly, "since thou hast thus rejected my proposals, thou knowest, full well, Elissa, that should I capture thee as thou sayst in honest warfare, thou wilt no longer have the chance of becoming my wife. Thou wilt become my slave, ay, my slave, nothing more. And how wouldst thou submit to the consequences?"

"Scipio," answered Elissa smilingly, for her anger had evaporated, knowing as she did the utter devotion of her companion, "shouldst thou conquer me in war, as I have conquered thee in love, I would submit without demur to all the penalties of the situation; and who knows but I might perchance not be so over-sad if thou shouldst thus capture me, and I have no voice in the matter. For despite thy nationality, that thou art most congenial to me, I must confess. Yet, until I am thy slave, with all due deference to thee, I may, I think, venture to retain, oh thou most amiable Scipio, my liberty of person, and likewise my fidelity both to my country Carthage and my lover Maharbal."

And with a playful laugh she gently seized him by the arm and led him away, saying:

"Now, that is a bargain between us, so let us not talk of such foolish matters further."

But Scipio, exasperated and sick at heart, even while allowing himself to be led by her caressing hand back to where the horses stood, swore by all his Roman gods that she should regret it yet, and that if ever she should fall into his hands he would bind her to keep her promise. And so they returned.

A few days later, Syphax having announced his approaching marriage with Sophonisba, and his consequent definite espousal of the Carthaginian cause, Scipio and Lælius had no other course left to them but to quit the Numidian Court and return to Rome.

. Scipio had a parting with Elissa that was almost tragic.

He ended by bidding her to remember that she might, for all her flouting him, yet some day become the mere slave of the man who now adored her so madly, and who was willing to make her his bride. Then ashamed of himself for having spoken thus, and having lost all control of himself, he pressed her madly in his arms for one short passionate second. And so they parted!

Shortly after the departure of Scipio and his suite, the marriage of King Syphax and Sophonisba was celebrated with great magnificence. Everyone at the Numidian court seemed happy and overjoyed at the event save Massinissa alone. He himself had sought the lovely Sophonisba's hand, but she had repulsed him in the most unmistakable terms. Therefore, in high dudgeon and vowing revenge, he had quitted his uncle's court with all his suite, without waiting for the marriage festivities.

When these were completed, bidding a tender farewell to her friend, now queen of Massaesyllia, and a warm farewell to her kindly host the Numidian King, Elissa with General Hasdrubal set sail for New Carthage, whither she arrived without accident. Her uncle Hasdrubal was but awaiting her return to once more prosecute the war in the northern provinces, and General Hasdrubal, the son of Gisco, having been despatched to the south-western parts with an army, Elissa herself once more resumed her old position as Regent and Governor of New Carthage.

She found upon her return the foolish little Princess Coecilia still in the palace, quite as vain and foolish as ever, and what was worse, on terms of considerable intimacy with a certain young Roman noble, one Marcus Primus, a prisoner in the palace awaiting a ransom from Rome. A patrician and of very high family, Marcus was a young officer of distinction, closely connected with the family of the Scipios. He had escaped on the occasion of the defeat of Cnœus Scipio, but Mago had wounded and unhorsed him in a subsequent encounter, after which, on account of his rank, he had not been treated as an ordinary prisoner, but sent to New Carthage.

and there during his recovery had been placed on parole. Hasdrubal, finding him of a somewhat pliant disposition, and hoping to make use of him later, had purposely kept him under semi-restraint only, and lodged him in some out-buildings within the palace grounds, to the walls of which he was confined. The Carthaginian General likewise occasionally entertained his prisoner at his own table.

Being of a particularly pleasing if somewhat effeminate appearance, and having an agreeable manner, the amorous Cœcilia was instantly attracted by him. She had not been long in taking advantage of the new opportunity thus afforded her of a flirtation, and during his convalescence had become intimate with the young Marcus Primus to an extent of which Hasdrubal had not the slightest idea. Elissa, however, upon her return, well knowing her aunt's disposition, was by no means so easily blinded to what was going on, and very soon had an explanation with the princess upon the subject.

"By whose orders," she inquired severely, "oh Cœcilia, hath this young Roman been admitted to the palace, and how cometh it to pass that, not content to be for ever wandering about with him in the gardens, thou must even bring him to the dining-table and place him by thy side? It is, methinks, somewhat unseemly on thy behalf to be thus closely consorting with a prisoner. Wilt thou never have done with thy folly and philanderings, that thou must needs bring our enemies thus under our very roof-trees?"

The Princess Coccilia blushed through her paint, and answered nervously:

"I, my dear! I assure thee I have nothing at all to do with it, my dear. The young man is most estimable, I assure thee, and perfectly harmless and well-behaved. 'Twas thine uncle Hasdrubal himself that brought him hither; I had no voice in the matter whatever, for he is nothing to me. But he seemeth, nevertheless, most amiable and—"

"And not at all averse to being made love to in the summerhouse in the orange grove, as I have seen myself," interrupted Elissa, "Well, since Hasdrubal brought him about the palace, and he is nothing to thee, he can, now Hasdrubal hath gone, henceforth remain even in his own quarters, and so no longer trouble thee with his presence. I do not at all approve of what hath much the appearance of a love-affair taking place here in our palace between a high-placed lady of the Carthaginian court and a Roman officer, no matter how well-bred or amiable he may be."

"Oh! certainly, my dear Elissa! as thou wilt; send him back to his quarters by all means. But, since thou art so particular, may I inquire if 'tis then only in the court of Syphax that thou dost approve of friendships, or even love-makings between Carthaginian ladies and Roman officers of rank?"

It was now the turn for Elissa's cheek to redden, for it was evident, from this sly cut, that Cœcilia had heard of the intimate terms upon which she herself had been with young Scipio.

She disdained, however, to notice the allusion further than to say sternly:

"I shall give mine instructions, mine aunt, and do thou see to it that thou consort with this Marcus Primus no longer. Thou mayst, however, see him once to bid him farewell if thou choosest."

"Oh, certainly," replied the little princess spitefully, "even as thou didst, so they say, take a somewhat prolonged farewell of thy Scipio." And she bounced off in a temper to find the latest object of her affections, with whom she concocted a plan whereby she could secretly visit him.

One morning not very long after this, it was reported that the young Roman was missing.

His raiment was discovered upon the battlements on the side next to the lagoon. In a courteously worded letter which he left behind him, he expressed his thanks for the kindness and hospitality which had been extended to him during his captivity. But he further stated that, wearied out with long waiting for the ransom that never came, he was determined to take his own life, especially as he was now placed under closer restraint. Thus it was concluded in the palace that Marcus Primus had committed suicide, and the hysterical little princess

made a somewhat exaggerated show of grief at the untimely end of her protégé.

Elissa, however, when no signs of the Roman's body were seen either in the lagoon or in the gulf, had very considerable doubts, not only of the genuineness of the suicide, but of Cœcilia's grief. Nor was she wrong in her suspicions, for the facts were these:

The princess, knowing that the water in the lagoon became fordable at certain periods, had, by bribing two of the guards and some fishermen of her own Iberian race, assisted Marcus to make his escape, which he had done in the garb of a fisherman, for since his confinement to his quarters he considered himself freed from his parole. She herself had made arrangements with the fishermen to carry her off also on a subsequent night, to the hiding-place where the Roman was to be concealed for a few days until she could join him.

This plan, however, was entirely frustrated by Elissa, whose suspicions were so thoroughly aroused that she had her aunt's movements watched day and night. When the frivolous little woman discovered this, she was wretched. Cursing Elissa in her heart, she flung herself upon her couch and wept bitterly for her sorrows, as being one of the most ill-treated women in the world. For she had really become passionately attached to this the latest of her lovers, and the difference between their ages had only made her affection all the stronger.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRUITS OF FOLLY.

Nor long after this, Scipio landed with reinforcements for the army at Tarraco in Northern Spain, and assumed command of all the shattered remnants of his two uncles' forces. He had with him his bosom friend, Caius Lælius, whom he placed in command of the fleet that had brought them over from Italy, and he set about at once to see what he could do to restore the damaged prestige of Rome throughout Iberia. In this he was much assisted by an incident that occurred a very few mornings after his arrival.

It so happened that shortly after daybreak a small fishing craft coming from the south crept into the harbour. The occupants, three in number, had with them a plentiful supply of fish of several kinds. The more ordinary sorts they readily disposed of to the soldiery, but a particularly fine selection of the choicer red mullets and grey mullets they would on no account part with, saying that they were a present for the Roman General himself. Carrying their burden between them, the fishermen had no difficulty in approaching the head-quarters of the General, especially as one of them, the youngest and most ragged-looking of the three, strange to say, not only spoke the Latin tongue but spoke it well.

When the fishermen arrived in front of the guard posted over the young General's tent, they were allowed to proceed no further. They created, however, such an uncouth clamour, after the manner of fishermen, that Scipio and Lælius looked out from the tent where they were sitting to see what was the cause of the disturbance. They arrived on the scene just in

time to prevent the audacious fishermen from being struck down by the butt ends of the soldiers' spears.

"Publius Scipio! Publius! dost thou not know me?" cried out the ragged one, laughing. "Tis thy kinsman, Marcus Primus, that would greet thee with a present of fish, ay, and of his own catching, too! Approach, I pray thee, and see these red mullets. Never yet hast thou seen the like," and he drew out several from the basket at his feet, letting them slip back again through his fingers with an air of pride.

Both Scipio and Lælius stared a moment in surprise, and then they too burst out into hearty laughter, while, to the astonishment of the guards, the General embraced the ragged fisherman most heartily, all covered with scales as he was.

"By Poseidon, king of the seas! my kinsman," cried he, "a right good fisherman indeed thou art; but by all the gods! whence brought ye these fish? Are they perchance just fresh from the River Styx, for I did greatly fear that thou hadst gained the dark Plutonian shore some moons ago?"

"Nay, nay, Scipio, my cousin, these be no fish from Hades, and I am not dead, but truly living, and have much to tell thee, so ye will first but order me a bath and fitting attire in which to appear before the Roman Commander. But now let me commend unto thee these my comrades in many a perilous adventure by land and sea. See to it, I pray thee, that thou have them well treated, for much good have they done for the Roman cause in thus saving me and bringing me to thee, oh Scipio, as thou and Lælius shall learn anon."

The guards soon took care of the fishermen, while Marcus was himself instantly taken into Scipio's own tent, rendered presentable, and provided with a repast, of which he seemed much in need, and in which he was joined by the two generals. There were no traces of effeminacy now about his sunburnt features as he lay there on a couch, eating the first decently-served meal he had seen since he had escaped from New Carthage.

"By Bacchus!" exclaimed he gleefully, as he drained off a cup of old wine. "I tell thee, Caius Lælius, I envy thee thy

profession of the sea. Nought is there like a few months in an open boat to make thee healthy and hearty. Then, again, how glorious the good red wine tasteth after nought but the trickling springs of water collected in caves in the rocks, or the rain water caught in the hollow of a sail when far out at sea. How dost thou like my fish, most noble Scipio? Ho, ho! a fisherman's life for me, say I! There is now none so cunning as I with a hook, and thou shalt, my kinsman, appoint me no longer to the command of thy vulgar maniples and squadrons, to fight with Libyans and Iberians, but to the command of a noble fleet of fishing boats; and then Piscator General Marcus Primus shall daily make war upon the finny monsters of the deep, and provide the army on shore with dainties fit for Lucullus himself."

Laughing again, he tossed off another cup of wine, for he was in high good humour to find himself once more with friends and comrades. While Caius Lælius did ample justice to the finny trophies of their guest, Scipio could hardly eat a morsel, so anxiously was he awaiting the moment when he might, with decent politeness, send away the attendant slaves, and ask the question nearest to his heart.

At last the time came.

"And what about Hannibal's daughter? How is she looking, Marcus? Tell me of her."

"Looking! why most radiantly beautiful. That is she ever, although, alas! she looked not very kindly upon me. It seemeth that she did not approve over much of flirtations between Carthaginian ladies and young Roman nobles. Didst thou find her so in Numidia, Scipio?"

Caius Lælius joined in the good-natured laugh against Scipio, who himself remained silent, as in deep thought. Presently Marcus continued:

"Personally I have nothing but thanks to give to the beautiful lady Elissa, for it was her very severity towards me that brought about my salvation, since by making me a prisoner to my house she absolved me from my parole. Further, her kind but foolish Aunt Cœcilia, who had fallen in love with me, and who

procured me mine escape, would never have allowed me to go had not Elissa forbidden her to see me openly. As it was, she purposed to have joined me, but as she never arrived, after waiting three days in concealment, I put to sea without her. I hope no harm hath befallen her, for by her means have I learned all about the defences of New Carthage, which I shall presently tell thee, Scipio; but what could I have done in an open boat with a plump little lady ten years older than myself, one too whose sole fear is lest her complexion should be spoiled by the sun? She would have died of lamentation and weeping when she saw herself day by day becoming, even as I am myself, burned as black as a coal."

"Thou wert far better without her, Marcus," quoth Scipio. "Besides, I would not have had her in the camp, since I like not traitors, and, put the matter whichever way thou wilt, that she was nought but a traitor to her own kinswoman and chief, Elissa, in this matter of thine escape is most apparent. Nevertheless, all is fair in love and war, and I trust that, by the aid of the gods, we shall be able to take advantage of her treachery. Thus shalt thou soon enter with me, at the head of a victorious army, the very city in which thou wert but lately a prisoner. After that thou canst take the lady out fishing with thee if thou choosest, and then either take care of her complexion for her or drown her as thou wilt, the latter I should say for choice. She will have served her turn anyway. Perhaps Lælius would like to take her off thy hands, and for a cruise in his flag-ship; he can provide her there with proper awnings to shade her from the sun."

"Not I, by Pluto!" cried Lælius, spitting disdainfully on the ground. "I too, like thee, hate a traitor, Scipio. I have far too high a regard and liking for our beautiful enemy, Elissa, ever, should it be in my power, to spare one who hath wronged her, as hath this Princess Cœcilia in enabling us to learn from Primus all the secrets of the defences of her city. Therefore the Princess Cœcilia had better beware of one Caius Lælius, whatever she may, from her passion, have done for thee personally, oh, Marcus, in the past and, through her treason, for Rome in general in the future."

"Well," returned Marcus Primus, "I for my part wish no ill to either the Lady Elissa or the Princess Coecilia, since between them they have, although working differently, been the means of my obtaining my liberty. Moreover, the former is so lovely that no man could possibly wish her any harm, while the latter is merry and frivolous, and one well calculated to help the wearisome hours to pass agreeably for an unfortunate prisoner.

"But talking of women, Lælius, there is one nowin New Carthage whom I warrant thee thou wouldst not disdain if thou hadst a chance of her. She is a young widow, named Cleandra, just back from Carthage, and as plump a little partridge as ever thou didst set eyes upon. Her mouth is a perfect rosebud, while as for her eyes—"

"What colour are her eyes?" interrupted Scipio, getting interested.

And then the talk degenerated into the usual conversation about women that is so common among young men, be they princes or ploughboys, in the pleasant half hour after a satisfactory meal.

Later on in the day, leaving the ever delightful theme of the fair sex on one side, Scipio revealed to his two friends that marvellous ability of generalship which afterwards astonished the world, and with these two alone he laid his plans, which were kept a secret from all else in the camp.

"Lælius," quoth he, "I am about to take a leaf out of our enemy's book, and in the same way that they crushed my father and mine uncle, will I now deal them a notable blow, should but the fates prove propitious. For, as they took advantage of my father and uncle being separated to crush them both in detail, so will I now take advantage of the separation of their own armies. Owing to their bad treatment of their Iberian allies, in by force raising money from them, and taking their daughters as hostages, nominally as guarantees for their good behaviour, and then dishonouring them, as though not the daughters of allied princes but mere slave girls captured in war, they have now stirred up a great part of Iberia against themselves. Thus, owing to the disaffection of the tribes.

instead of combining to attack us here in Tarraco, see how they are split up! Hasdrubal, Hannibal's brother, is besieging a city of the Caspetani; the other Hasdrubal, him whom we met at the court of Syphax and found then to be a right good boon companion, is away near the mouth of the Tagus in Lusitania; Mago again, Hannibal's other brother, even he, whom I well remember springing upon us from an ambush at that unlucky business of the Trebia, and to whom thou, Marcus, didst owe thy wound and thy captivity, is, so I learn, away to the south-west, beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Thus they are all separated from one another.

"How foolish hath been the conduct of these Carthaginians! who, not content with behaving badly to the daughters of the lesser princes, have, so I learn, even made nominal hostages, but really concubines, of the daughters of the greatest chiefs of all, ay, even of their oldest and staunchest friends, such as Andobales, King of Central Iberia, and his brother Mandonius.

"Now, see the result of all this! Yesterday I received an embassy from Andobales, offering friendship to Rome, and complaining bitterly of the Carthaginians, his old allies. That offer I shall accept. And no doubt many more of the tribes will come in at once when they see with what honour I shall treat those that come first. Then, having nothing to fear from the Iberians and Celtiberians, I shall give it out publicly that I am about to sally forth to attack Hasdrubal among the Caspetani, but shall carefully avoid doing anything of the kind. For, while they are anxiously expecting me in one place, I shall promptly proceed to another. And I regret to say that it is against the New Town, Lælius, ay, even against our one dear friend among the Carthaginians, the charming Elissa herself, that I must deliver an unexpected attack.

"For each of the three armies of the enemy is at a distance of more than ten days' march from the New Town. Now, were I to try to take them all in detail, our losses would be so great, that even if we conquered one, we might fall in a combat with the next. Again, if I were to attack one force alone, in a

fortified camp, one of the others might come to its assistance, and we so be destroyed. With the New Town, however, things are different. For thou, Marcus, hast given me the most minute details of all the defences, and it seemeth that they have there an utterly inadequate garrison, so sure have they been of the strength of the defences of the city. But the information thou hast given me, which, thanks to thy foolish mistress Coecilia, thou hast learned, to the effect that the lagoon on the landward side runs nearly dry each tide, changes the whole aspect of those defences. And I see my way, therefore, to carrying the place by a sudden storm. It will doubtless, alas, cost us many lives; but what are soldiers meant for but to be killed in their country's cause? It hath been the fate of the Scipios for generations past to die in battle, and may be mine and thine as well."

"Ay," here interposed Marcus, cheerily, "we all run an equal risk in battle, and even if we do go under, we three at all events shall not share the ill-luck of the raw recruit who falls in his very first engagement."

"This, then, is my plan," continued Scipio. "While pretending that we are going north we will go south. In the meantime, we will get many scaling ladders ready, having them made in sections that can be joined together easily. Thou, Lælius, shalt, with the whole fleet, proceed by sea to New Carthage and carry them for us. But not a word, not a single breath beyond the walls of this tent to give a suspicion of our design."

"Poor Elissa!" sighed Lælius, "I am truly sorry for her; she had better have hearkened unto thee in Numidia, Scipio—for, unless she die, she will assuredly soon now be thy slave. And hath she not made a certain compact with thee, Scipio?"

"Ay, she hath made a compact with me, Lælius," replied Scipio, smiling sadly; "but by Jupiter and Venus! I know not when the time cometh whether I shall enforce the fulfilment of her share of the contract or no. Besides, who knoweth the fortune of war? It may prove, perchance, that it be I who become her slave, and she may put me in chains," and he sighed thoughtfully. "Not that that will alter matters

much," he added half-pathetically, half-humorously, "for by Venus and Cupid! I became her slave and was in chains from the very first moment that ever I cast eyes upon her beautiful face."

"Ah, well," replied his friend lightly, "there will be at all events one happy man should we take New Carthage. For Marcus will find his turtle-dove once more, and 'twould, methinks, but be fitting that he should reward his fair princess by marrying her—eh, Scipio?"

"Hum!" replied Marcus Primus, smiling, "marriage is a somewhat serious matter for a soldier. Now, thou, Lælius, art a sailor, and like the snail thou carryest thy house with thee. Therefore I will display a little self-sacrifice. Thou shalt, if she be captured, take the princess, even as Scipio said, for a while with thee on thy ship. Then if, after some months of close observation, thou shouldst still deem her worthy of matrimony—"

"I may marry her myself, I suppose? and Marcus Primus will find that he hath pressing business elsewhere! is that thine idea? Nay, nay, my friend, I will have none of thy Spanish beauty; but I will, under such circumstances, wed her off at once to my chief boatswain; he is a fine fellow, and will make her a right good husband, I warrant thee. With all due deference to this grand princess of thine, I think that 'twould be she and not the boatswain that would be most honoured by the union."

Scipio smiled, but Marcus looked rather glum at the jest. He was still young enough to be a little proud of his conquest. But he was a good-natured young fellow, and far too happy at his recent escape to care much for any of their banter. Therefore, he only called for a cup of wine, and ostentatiously raising it to his lips, invoked the blessing of the gods upon his preserver, the fair and rotund Cœcilia. Wherein he showed himself in soul a very gentleman, one who did not forget a woman as soon as he had profited by her benefits towards himself.

CHAPTER V.

MARS VICTORIOUS.

Scipio soon set his army in motion. He was still a young man of less than seven-and-twenty when, with twenty-five thousand infantry and two thousand five hundred cavalry, he made one of the most wonderful marches on record in any age, arriving in front of New Carthage in only seven days. Lælius, having taken on board his ship Marcus Primus and the two fishermen who had helped the young man to escape, managed things so well that he arrived in the harbour of New Carthage at the very same hour that Scipio with his host appeared and encamped in front of the town on the land side. There had been no time to place the booms across the harbour, for it was a thorough surprise for Elissa; but she was nevertheless, with her small garrison, ever prepared for war. She had long since, especially since her city had been drained of troops for the armies in the field, trained many of the townspeople to warlike exercises. Therefore when she received from Scipio, before any hostilities began, a most courteous invitation to surrender, expressed in friendly terms and offering life and safety to all within the walls, she answered equally courteously but firmly, saying that she was there to defend the city, and would only yield to force, and fight to the last.

Poor Elissa! she knew full well, when she saw the large fleet of Caius Lælius anchored well within the gulf on one side, and the large force of Scipio encamped almost within arrowshot of the walls, just across the lagoon on the other, that she had not much chance; for that if the city should fall by no other means, it must fall by starvation, unless she could hold out until such time as one of the Carthaginian armies should

come to her relief. Nevertheless, she determined to do all in her power, and strain every nerve to uphold the honour of her country and her father's name. Therefore, before the fighting actually began, she rode all over the town, all round the defences, and exhorted everyone, whether soldier or civilian, to do his duty. She encouraged them by falsely saying that she had just received advices from her uncle Mago, that he was advancing with a large force to the relief of the city, and thus generally contrived to put the inhabitants of the New Town in good heart. For no one within the walls ever dreamt of the possibility of such a strongly-fortified place being carried by storm.

It will be remembered that New Carthage stood upon a high hill jutting out into a gulf, while upon the land side it was, save for the part near the causeway and bridge on the isthmus opposite the main gate, protected by the lagoon, which had been artificially connected with the sea. High walls protected the town upon every side, while steep cliffs covered with the red-flowered, prickly cactus further protected its sea front.

When the Roman soldiers first saw the place, their hearts fell within them, for it looked so utterly impregnable. But young Scipio. who was throughout his career, despite his good qualities, much of a charlatan, informed them in an address that Neptune, or Poseidon, king of the seas, had appeared to him in a dream, and informed him that he would personally assist him in the capture of the city. Thus he greatly raised the spirits of his men. Moreover, as he had often done the same kind of thing before, and had usually been lucky in the result. he was looked upon as one protected by the gods. Therefore. his bare-faced assertion of their promised intervention on his behalf was believed by the ignorant and superstitious soldiery, with the result of inspiring them with redoubled courage for the tremendous enterprise before them. Scipio continued his address by pointing out to his army the immense advantage the capture of the town would be to the Romans, by giving them an excellent seaport from which they might invade Africa; he dwelt also upon the enormous booty within the walls, and further, that as it contained all the Spanish hostages, should these fall into his hands, he could, by restoring them to their native countries, make friends with all the princes of Iberia, after which the utter defeat of the Carthaginians throughout the peninsula would be assured.

And, finally, he promised mural crowns of gold to such of his men as should be the first to escalade the walls.

Meanwhile, within the city, Elissa ordered the Carthaginian flag to be hoisted on every post and every house, in order that the presence everywhere of the blessed white horse upon the purple ground, an ensign given to Dido by the ancient and immortal gods, should remind each and every one of his duty.

Thus, with the standards gaily fluttering in the breeze from every eminence, and festoons of flags across the streets, the fair city of New Carthage looked more like a city celebrating some joyous festival than a town about to be plunged into all the horrors of a most bloody combat.

The trained veterans at her disposal did not much exceed some two thousand men. Fifteen hundred of these Elissa placed under the orders of a chief named Mago, with instructions to post the greater number along the walls, both on the land side and the sea side, upon the battlements of which, at every point, were heaped-up piles of darts, huge stones, and masses of lead. Moreover, cross-bows, called scorpions, on account of the sting they discharged in the shape of a small but deadly missile, were ranged round the walls at short intervals, with their ammunition placed ready beside them.

The remainder of Mago's men were stationed either upon the commanding eastern hill that jutted out into the sea, upon which stood the temple of Æsculapius, or in the citadel.

Another superior officer whom she had under her orders was named Armes. Him she posted, with two thousand men of those whom she had trained from the townspeople, at the gate leading to the isthmus,

A body of one hundred men of the veterans she reserved to herself as a personal guard, to accompany her whither she would throughout the expected siege, and another hundred

under old Captain Gisco she left in charge of the palace and the women therein. The palace was so situated that it was only immediately in danger from the sea side on the south-east. where the walls of the garden formed a part of the actual walls of the city. Upon the other three sides the high and battlemented walls of the garden were so placed that, while they overlooked the town, they were quite separate from its outward defences, and the only entrance upon that side was a gateway. so defended by a drawbridge over a deep fosse that a few men could defend it against thousands. The small postern door on the south-east side, leading to the harbour, Elissa caused to be barricaded with stones, while the marble steps leading down to the sea she had partially destroyed and partially blocked up with strongly tethered masses of the prickly pear cactus which grew so freely on the cliffs, and which were calculated to form a terrible obstacle to any escalading foe.

In conclusion Elissa gave instructions for bands of the armed inhabitants of the town to be placed on the walls at intervals along the whole of the sea front, which was menaced by the powerful fleet of Lælius, and upon the land front facing the isthmus, as either of these parts could, although the walls were very high, be assailed with scaling ladders. She had thus made the very best disposition of the small force at her command. One place, however, she failed to garrison in strength, partly from want of men and partly on account of its natural strength, and this was where, on the north side of the isthmus, the lagoon washed the walls of the city. And now, having done all in her power for the defence, she returned to her palace, and assembled all the frightened women therein to the morning repast.

Elissa herself was clad in her war gear, and merely removed her golden helmet, and cast her beautiful shield, inlaid with its golden horse, upon one side ere she sank upon one of the silk-cushioned divans around the board whereon was spread the meal. The eye of the young maiden was bright, her look determined, and her cheek flushed with a noble courage. Although still only in her twenty-first year, she had all the abile

ity and experience of an old commander; and, noting her confident appearance, her youth was quite forgotten by the other women present, who looked to her for protection.

One of them was a most lovely maiden named Idalia, a girl of seventeen summers, with large, dreamy eyes like those of a fawn. Her beauty was so great, her face such a pure oval and so gentle, her willowy form so bewitchingly enticing and rounded, that she was quite the equal in beauty of Elissa herself, although in an entirely different style. She was, by nature, timorous even as the fawn whom her eyes resembled.

Rising from her seat, Idalia approached Elissa, whose glorious masses of dark, ruddy hair, having broken loose from their restraining fillet, were streaming over the light steel cuirass inlaid with gold which covered her. The sunlight, breaking in from an open window behind, shone through the almost black tresses, distinctly showing up the ruddy lights beneath. Without a word Idalia, whose eyes were filled with tears, caressingly laid an arm round Elissa's neck and kissed her gently, almost reverently. Then, lifting up the flowing locks, she pressed them also to her lips, then quietly readjusted them below the silver fillet which had previously restrained them.

"Wherefore dost thou weep?" exclaimed Elissa kindly, patting the pale cheek so near her own. "Fear not, we shall beat off the Romans, and thou shalt come to no harm. So banish these tears; I will protect thee, pretty one. Come, be reassured by me; do I look fearful of the result? That thy life shall be safe I warrant thee, for whoever else may fall, the great goddess Tanais, whose votary thou art, will surely protect such a beauteous young maid as thou."

"Oh, Elissa, dear Elissa!" replied the fair maid, in sad but musical tones, "believe me that I trust in thee and in the goddess Tanais also; but 'tis not for myself I weep. 'Tis with fear for my beloved Allucius. Canst thou or the goddess Tanais protect him? Alas! I fear 'tis not in thy power, and I weep lest he may fall."

"Allucius, Prince of the Celtiberians, must do his duty with fhe rest of us," rejoined Elissa straightforwardly but not un-

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kindly; "and he hath a post of honour, since I have placed him as second in command to Armes at the city gate. But should he fall, he will die a most honourable death, and one that will be worthy of thee. Therefore, sweet one, put a more cheerful face upon the matter, I pray thee, for thou wouldst not have him act the poltroon, and shield himself behind thy chiton, wouldst thou? But thou canst pray to the gods for him."

"Nay, nay," cried the girl proudly, drawing herself up and dashing away her tears, "I would not have him other than a noble soldier. I thank thee for teaching me my duty, Elissa, and I will be brave."

"I think thou art making a most unnecessary fuss, Idalia," here interrupted the Princess Cocilia spitefully. "What folly thou dost talk about this Allucius. Why trouble about him at all when thou knowest that, with thy youth and thy beauty, thou are safe thyself? For the worst that can happen to thee is that thou mayst fall perchance to the lot of some Roman noble. Who knows but Scipio might take a fancy to thee himself. Thou hast already met him, since thou wast with Elissa at the Court of Syphax."

"Princess Cœcilia!" exclaimed Idalia.

But Cœcilia continued peevishly in a torrent of words: "Nay, interrupt me not; I know what thou wouldst say, that 'tis merely for Elissa he hath come here, and that 'tis on account of her late foolish coquettings with him in Numidia that all these miseries are come upon us. For what other reason, save to make her his, hath he come here to attack us women instead of going to fight Hasdrubal or Mago as, had he been worth calling a man, he would have done? But fear not thou, Idalia, those Romans are not particular as to whether they have one girl or twenty; and since Elissa hath brought him here, and thou art moreover a worshipper of Tanais, thou wilt doubtless be but too pleased to save thyself at the expense of thine honour."

"Princess Cœcilia!" exclaimed Elissa, whose eyes were flaming with fury as she rose to her feet, "begone! retire to

thine apartment, and see thou stir not thence without mine orders. For despite thy calumnies, I do much misdoubt me but 'tis thine own traitorous conduct that hath brought the Romans upon us. Should it prove so, beware! Cleandra, I beg thee accompany the princess to her apartment, and give instructions to the palace guard that mine aunt is to be considered a prisoner."

"Oh! in sooth, Elissa!" exclaimed the now utterly cowed little princess, turning pale, "in good sooth, Elissa, thou hast altogether misunderstood me. I did but speak in jest. Indeed, I did not mean a word."

"Begone!" replied Elissa, "I will not hear thee more," and she waved her hand to Cleandra to lead her off.

This Cleandra did with some difficulty, for the little woman's whole body was now convulsed with sobs, and her knees trembled and shook so together that she could scarcely stand. It was almost impossible not to feel pity for her as the huge tears washed the paint from her now considerably damaged complexion. But Cleandra obeyed her orders, and then rejoined her mistress and friend, to whose home in Spain she had voluntarily returned from Carthage upon her husband's recent death in a drunken brawl. This she had done, even although by doing so she was exposing herself to a renewal of the state of slavery in which she had been before her departure. But the ties of mutual gratitude that united Elissa and Cleandra were so great that there could scarcely now be considered to exist ought save friendship between them.

After this incident the repast proceeded in peace. It was scarcely concluded when two messengers rushed in, one crying out that the Romans on the land side were advancing across the isthmus and threatening the gate, the other that the Roman fleet was also advancing and the sailors attempting to warp their ships to the base of the cliff on the seaward side of the city so as to land the marines. Elissa speedily arose, seized her shield and a sheaf of darts, and repaired first to the battlements on the seaward side of the palace. There she saw that the enemy were in the greatest confusion. The ships were so

numerous that they were getting in each other's way. There was a great deal of clamour, but owing to the vigorous defence that was being made, Lælius was not likely for some time to come to be able to land his men in any numbers upon the sloping rocks. For the missiles being hurled upon the assailants from the walls, falling upon the confused ships and boats, were causing the greatest disorder. Some Carthaginian ships, moreover, which were lying under the shelter of the walls, were advancing gallantly to a counter attack, and although their numbers were few, they being only eighteen, they were able to create an excellent diversion.

Accompanied by her body-guard, the young Regent next hurried down to the battlements near the main gate of the city. Thence she beheld the splendid and awe-inspiring sight of the whole of the Roman army with ensigns flying and eagles displayed, drawn up in line at some distance behind the bridge which crossed the waters of the lagoon where it flowed out into the gulf.

The men of this noble army, whose arms and polished shields were glittering with dazzling brilliancy in the sun, were standing motionless.

Far in advance of the main body, however, a considerable detached column of heavy-armed troops, consisting of Hastati, Principes, and Triarii, in their three lines, were crossing the bridge, maniple by maniple, and deploying the maniples into line, alternately to the right and lest in succession, as they arrived upon the city side of the bridge over the narrow channel that traversed the isthmus. Without a moment's hesitation. Elissa gave the order from the top of the ramparts where she was standing to Armes, the tribune commanding the force of two thousand citizens within the gates, to engage this attacking column of Romans. With promptitude this order was obeyed; and sallying forth with gallantry, the troops under Armes rushed upon the foe. Those who had crossed the bridge were, with much slaughter, driven backwards, and thrust, either into the lagoon to the one side, or into the inrunning waters of the gulf on the other, while the centre of the Romans,

falling back upon those who were still crossing the bridge in rear, created considerable confusion, and thus the centre also suffered much loss. The whole body of Romans then fell back gradually towards their own main body, the Carthaginians crossing the bridge, deploying in turn into line, and pursuing them.

From her vantage point upon the battlements over the gateway, Elissa could plainly see the error into which Armes was falling, for she perceived that the Romans were gradually pushing up more and more supports from their main body. therefore sent instant instructions to Armes to fall back again to the city gates. But her messenger arrived too late, for before he had reached the contending forces the largely reinforced Romans were advancing once more, and, after a terrible hand-to-hand conflict, driving the Carthaginians back again over the bridge. Armes was now slain; and although Allucius, the lover of Idalia, made most heroic efforts to rally the citizens, they were at length driven back headlong up to and through the city gates, Allucius himself being sorely wounded. The Romans would have entered the gates with the fugitives, but those upon the wall commenced casting down a rain of missiles upon them, causing much loss. Scipio, moreover, who was watching the contest from a hill called the Hill of Mercury, caused the trumpets to sound the retreat, for the number of men engaged was far too few, and had they got through the gate they would have been eaten up inside.

So the Romans fell back leisurely after a terrible carnage.

While the remnants of the Carthaginians were rallying within the walls, Scipio, without giving them time for rest, instantly despatched a large number of men with scaling ladders to assault that part of the walls which was situated near the principal gate. He himself followed to superintend. Racing across the open, carrying the long ladders, the Romans speedily reared them in a hundred places at once. But the ladders were scarcely long enough to reach the top; moreover, Elissa was ever present in person to animate and encourage the defenders. In many cases the ladders broke with the

weight of the many armed men upon them, who were thus cast headlong; in other cases, the men at the top became giddy, and fell off, carrying others with them, while those who actually reached the top of the battlements were hurled backwards upon their comrades.

Scipio himself, covered by three men armed with linked oblong shields, to protect him from the vast number of missiles being hurled, visited every part of the line in turn to encourage his followers; but it was, he saw, of no use. Elissa, from the top of the ramparts, for her part soon recognised him. Standing exposed upon the wall, she cried out to him scornfully by name, saying that she, although only a woman, had but one shield to his three, and that, nevertheless, she defied him to single And then she cast several javelines, accompanying each dart with bitter and mocking remarks; but they were all warded off by the shields of his three protectors. A second time was Scipio now compelled to sound a retreat, and this time his men fell back in confusion. Scipio, however, noticed that now the time had come for the ebb of the tide from the lagoon, and further, that a strong north wind was causing the waters to run out very swiftly.

Therefore, to engage the attention of the triumphant Carthaginians, he now sent a fresh body of a thousand troops, with more scaling ladders, to the assault at the same place as before, while he himself with another large body of men, after a lateral movement to his left, plunged into the lagoon, crying out to his troops that Neptune was, as he had foretold, coming to his assistance by draining off its waters.

The water was not at first more than waist deep, and soon only knee deep. Therefore, quite unobserved by the combatants near the gate, he contrived to cross in safety and to mount the walls unopposed. Then, rushing along the walls with one party, he soon drove most of the defenders off the ramparts. Another party he sent to attack the defenders of the gate from the inside. At the same time, the Romans on the outside, hacking away at the gate with axes, cut it through, and thus was it captured from within and without at once. In

the meantime, the Romans with the scaling ladders, who had attacked from the dry land, also got over the walls as the defenders fell back before Scipio's party.

The loss on the Carthaginian side was now terrible, as the Romans, forcing their way into the town by the gate and ramparts alike, advanced, killing every living creature they met, whether man, woman, child, or even domestic animals. This was done to strike terror into the heart of the people, and was an old Roman custom upon such occasions. Scipio, meanwhile, with a band of warriors continued to advance along the ramparts, and soon met in hand-to-hand combat Elissa with her guard. He cried to her to yield, but her only reply was a dart, which transfixed his shield, for he had now but one. The terrible hand-to-hand struggle continued on the walls, the assailants and defenders alike seizing each other by the waist and casting each other over.

At length, just as Scipio thought he was about to capture Elissa and her few remaining followers, she gave an order to her men, who, all turning swiftly, ran until they reached the gate in the wall of the palace, which they entered, the gate being closed and the drawbridge raised in the face of the victorious Scipio, who was thus baulked, for the moment at all events, of his prey. It would, indeed, have been a triumph for Elissa could she have but continued the struggle until nightfall. For then she and those with her might have escaped by a secret path they knew of down the rocks. But it was not to be! Scarcely had she gained the shelter of the garden when a storming party of truculent seamen, headed by Caius Lælius himself, with whom was also Marcus Primus, burst over the walls on the seaward side. And now another terrible struggle took place—this time in the garden—the flowers being all trampled down, and the garden walks and statues being soon covered with blood.

At length, old Gisco and nearly all her guard being killed, Elissa herself now quite exhausted, with a javeline transfixed in her shoulder, resolved to die, sword in hand. She rushed upon Caius Lælius, calling upon him loudly by name to slay her and so

save her from dishonour. But, her foot slipping in a pool of blood upon some marble slabs near the fountain, she fell. Caius Lælius himself seized her, and easily disarming her, made her his prisoner, thus protecting her from further injury. And then Caius took the palace and all within it without more bloodshed. For none but women were left alive inside.

In the meanwhile, Mago and all his remaining men in the citadel and upon the hill of Æsculapius had surrendered, and after this the order was given to plunder the town.

Thus did the city of New Carthage fall into the hands of the Romans under Scipio. He, the gates of the garden being thrown open to him from within, arrived upon the scene before Elissa had been removed within the palace walls, and terrible, indeed, was the scene of carnage that met his view in the once peaceful garden. For, animated by Elissa's personal presence, the palace guard and Elissa's own body-guard had fought around her with the heroism of despair. Thus, there were quite as many corpses or wounded men of the Romans as of the Carthaginians lying about in all directions. Some even were lying dead or dying, half in and half out of the fish-pond, the waters of which were crimson with blood, while the gold-fish, sickened by the gore, were swimming round and round in little circles, belly uppermost.

In other places the bodies of dead men, some of whom yet grasped each other by the throat, were half-buried in masses of geranium or carnation plants, the crimson of whose petals formed but a variety of colour with the crimson and purple hues of the still warm life-blood with which the green leaves were all drenched and befouled. Others, again, in falling, had clasped a standard rose-bush, and, pulling it down with them, now lay with their pale faces turned skywards, buried in a mass of sweet-scented roses pressing against their ghastly cheeks.

Although her left shoulder was pierced and mangled, Elissa's wound was not apparently very dangerous. She had retained perfect consciousness while Caius Lælius extracted the

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weapon, which he did by cutting off the haft and drawing the head through; but from the agony caused by this operation she had swooned and fallen back insensible only a moment before Scipio arrived upon the scene of the bloody conflict; and she was now lying as one dead.

CHAPTER VI.

CŒCILIA'S DEGRADATION.

Scipio burst into the palace garden flushed with the joy of victory, but when he saw his beloved Elissa lying at his feet, he forgot everything, save that there lay, apparently lifeless, the body of the woman whom he loved. He stood for a moment gazing, then angrily turned upon Lælius.

"What is this, Caius? Hast thou slain her? Thou hast surely not dared to slay Elissa? But nay, my friend," he continued, his anger quickly turning to grief, "I know that thou didst love her even as I did. Forgive me for thus wronging thee. Give me thy hand, my comrade."

Then throwing himself upon the ground by her side, Scipio cried:

"Oh, Elissa, my beloved Elissa, art thou dead? for if thou art, then will I not survive thee! Gone is the glory of my victory! thrice accursed be the hand that hath struck thee down!"

Gently he raised her in his arms, and, aided by Caius Lælius, reverently they removed her golden helmet and the corselet of steel inlaid with gold, beneath which she was clad in but a silken vest of Tyrian purple, which, being all drenched with blood, they were forced partly to remove in order to staunch the still flowing gore.

Commanding his followers to fall back to a distance, Scipio remained upon his knees supporting her, with her beautiful face lying upon his shoulder; while Caius Lælius brought some water in his helmet from the waters of the upspringing fountain, which were fresh, and unstained with blood.

While she was being supported thus, and the two men were

ministering to her, bathing her face and binding up her wound. Elissa recovered her senses with a sigh.

For a few seconds she did not realise the situation, and remained motionless, and then the whole sad truth burst upon her. With a bitter smile she spoke.

"And so it hath then come to pass, oh, Scipio! and thou hast conquered me and killed my faithful troops, and I am now thy slave. I have not forgotten! I was but now, even as thou art thyself, a warrior, then why hast thou removed my harness and exposed my person to the crowd, and why dost thou embrace me thus, even on the battlefield itself? Surely 'tis unmanly of thee. Oh, I do hate thee, Scipio! Release me, I beg of thee, and insult me not in public."

With a look of repulsion on her beautiful pale face, she turned from him, and would have withdrawn herself from his embrace, but was too weak.

"Nay, nay, dear Elissa, mistrust me not," rejoined Scipio, with the air not of a conqueror, but of a very suppliant. "Thou dost wrong me. 'Twas but to save thy life that Caius and I alone, both thy friends, have thus removed thine armour; and even now the joy of seeing thee living far outweighs the grief caused by the bitterness of thy words."

"And so ye are my friends, are ye? Pretty friends, in sooth, to war upon a woman and murder all my people!" answered Elissa, arguing, like a woman, unreasonably, and forgetting that all the bloodshed could have been spared and no lives lost had she but accepted the offered terms of amnesty.

"Is that, too, a friend?" she asked, pointing with her unwounded arm to a Roman warrior who, sorely smitten, was lying near, in whom she recognised Marcus Primus. "Art thou my friend, oh Marcus? Thou who hast eaten the bread of our hospitality here, but who as a return did by treachery escape, and lead back an army to slay those who succoured thee when thou wast wounded and in distress. And is thy paramour, the Princess Cœcilia, likewise my friend? Oh! I see it all now, thy pretended suicide arranged with her, and that 'twas she who taught thee the secret of the lowering of the waters of the

lagoon. If this be friendship, a curse I say upon all such friends! and may the dreadful and undying curse of all the almighty gods fall upon both thee and thine accomplice."

"Nay, curse me not, and I so near death, Elissa," the young man replied feebly; and the tears came to his eyes, partly from pain at witnessing the bitter distress of this noble young woman, partly from excessive weakness. "I do most deeply grieve for thy sorrow, believe me, and I have but fought for my country as thou hast so nobly done for thine. I pray thee, then, remove thine awful curse from the head of a dying man, or I may not die in peace. Remove that curse, I pray thee once more, then may we meet as brethren in a country where is no war, when it shall be thine own time to cross the Styx."

"I pray the great god Melcareth that that time be now near at hand, oh, Marcus. In sooth, I feel anew so weak that we may perhaps cross the Styx together; and since 'twould be strange and sad to commence a new existence together as enemies, I will even revoke my curse upon thee, yet not my curse from the head of Cœcilia."

"Who hath never done thee any wrong, and is most loyal," replied the dying Marcus Primus. "I thank thee much, Elissa," he added, with a gasp. And then, with this noble lie upon his lips, uttered merely to save the woman who had loved and befriended him, he gave a long, sad sigh, and fell back dead.

"Scipio," quoth Elissa, now very faintly, for she had lost much blood, "I think I likewise am dying, and 'tis not meet that I should die thus in the arms of an enemy of my country; therefore, if thou hast any nobility of soul, thou wilt release me and send for Cleandra, one of my women. Know this, I do not, nay, I cannot hate thee as I ought. I might even have loved thee had things been otherwise, for thou art most wondrous kind; but if thou dost love me, then let me not, for my country's sake, for my lover Maharbal's sake, for mine own honour's sake, die thus in thine arms; but yet I thank thee and Lælius likewise."

Her last words were scarcely audible.

Scipio, himself nearly as pale as Elissa, pressed one reverent kiss upon her lips, and murmured:

"I obey thy behest, Elissa." Then he laid her gently down, and, leaving Lælius with her, dashed within the palace for the first time, wandering vaguely about, and calling for the woman named Cleandra, who was soon brought out to him from among the captives.

Leading her to Elissa, he gave his fair foe into Cleandra's charge.

Elissa, now speechless with pain and weakness, yet still sensible, gave him one look of gratitude, and then closed her eyes. And thus, with instructions that she should be borne gently into her own apartments, Scipio left her to see to his troops and to the thousands of prisoners. The whole scene had not taken more than some ten minutes.

There was plenty for Scipio to do, for now were all his generals and captains attending upon him from all parts of the town to ask for instructions on every subject. Among other points to be decided two men were brought before him, each a claimant for the mural crown in gold, promised to the first man who had escaladed the wall.

One of them was Quintus Trebellius, a centurion of the fourth legion; the other was Sextus Digitius, a seaman; and a hot contest was on foot between the soldiers of the land forces, and the seamen and marines of the fleet, who espoused their rival claims with great warmth.

Although Scipio appointed three commissioners to decide the case, the contest between the soldiers and the sailors became so hot that Caius Lælius soon pointed out to his friend and leader that unless the matter were decided so as to please both parties, a conflict would probably break out.

Thereupon Scipio showed his tact. Calling both Trebellius and Digitius before him, he complimented each of them warmly, said he was convinced that they had both mounted the wall at the same time, and granted them both mural crowns for valour. To his friend Lælius he also awarded a mural crown, and gave him besides thirty head of oxen. Many

other rewards he gave to those who had distinguished themselves. In this way he preserved peace in his camp, and all were satisfied and pleased with their general.

There was another incident which occurred on the following day, which did much to enhance young Scipio's reputation with his troops, and his popularity with the Iberians, hitherto the allies of Carthage.

From the period when, after the morning repast, Elissa had sallied forth to repel the stormers, the lovely young girl Idalia had been missing from the palace. In the confusion of the assault and subsequent events, none of the frightened women in the palace had observed her absence, but, once the storm completed and the Romans masters of the place, the women, who were now prisoners, noticed that she was no longer among their number.

When on the following morning Scipio was superintending the division of the enormous plunder among the legions, a small knot of soldiers were seen approaching him, leading a young girl, who was thickly veiled from head to foot. Their leader, coming forward to Scipio, addressed him as follows:

"Oh, Scipio, well is it known throughout the army that thou dost give great rewards and mete out justice to others, and yet, save the reward of honour, nought hast thou retained for thine own self. Now we, some of thy followers, seeing that thou art a young man, and known from thy youth to love the fair, have discovered a gift which we would offer unto thee in the shape of a young virgin, who is fit for a king. For we have thought that such a gift would be acceptable unto thee. We took the girl yesterday, and she hath been religiously respected and carefully veiled, lest any of the tribunes or prefects, seeing her, should have become enamoured of her beauty and taken her away from us, who would save her for thee."

The young general's curiosity was at once excited. Smiling, he said:

"I thank ye, my men, for your kind thought of your general; but come, let us see this paragon of beauty. Unveil her."

When the thick covering which alone concealed the face and form of the maiden was removed, Scipio and all the officers near him were simply astounded at the excessive loveliness of the charming Idalia, who, her eyes suffused with tears and her face and bosom with burning blushes, stood revealed, trembling before him.

Scipio was moved to pity for her wretched condition.

"By Hymen and Venus! thou hast spoken the truth, my men, and I do greatly thank ye for this beautiful present. For never save in one woman alone,"—he was thinking of Elissa—"have I seen aught so lovely in the human form. My men, since ye have made me the gift, I shall retain it to do as I choose with, and ye shall be all suitably rewarded. And were I other than the general commanding the forces, there is no present which could have been so acceptable. But seeing that I am the general, it becomes me to use a little self-denial in this matter. Therefore, lest from gazing too long upon such charms I should begin to think that I am but a private person who can do as he chooseth in such a matter, give me that veil."

Taking the heavy veil he went up to the trembling girl, and reassuring her kindly, covered her shoulders and limbs with it. At the same time he gave her a fraternal kiss on the cheek, bidding her not to fear, for he would be as a brother to her. But Idalia, broken down with all the suffering and shame that she had undergone, and moved by Scipio's unexpected kindness, threw herself down and, clasping his knees, would have kissed his feet. This he would by no means allow, but raising her gently, inquired into her condition and the circumstances attending her capture.

Then the soldiers told him that on the previous day, when the order had been given for a space to slay every living thing that they met, but not to begin to plunder until further orders, they had pursued some fugitives into the porch of a doorway and killed them. Glancing within a room beyond, they had seen a wounded Iberian chieftain, and were about to kill him also, but that this maiden had flung her body full length upon the Iberian, and clung to him so tightly that they had been unable to slay him without wounding or perhaps slaying her also. Then had their leader, the same who now had addressed Scipio, reminded the men that the order was to kill all whom they should meet in the streets, but that there was no order to slay those in the houses, and as the young man himself also offered, in the Latin tongue, a large ransom for his life, they had spared them both.

"In that ye have done well," said Scipio; "and thy reward shall be the greater," continued he to the leader, "for that thou didst exactly obey and follow out mine orders to the letter. For mine order was indeed but to slay all living things ye met in the street; there was no order to slay those in the houses. Now tell the Quæstors, whose duty it is to take the money for such as are ransomed, where this young man lies, and when they have rewarded you as I shall direct, ye can depart, leaving the maiden here."

So the soldiers all received large sums of money, and their leader in addition had a magnificent golden ring presented to him, and they departed rejoicing.

Scipio took Idalia with him to the palace, where Elissa was delighted to see her once more. Scipio, then sending for Allucius, prince of the Celtiberians, whose life had been twice saved by his beautiful lover, first by dragging him when wounded into a house, and then by covering his body with her own, caused him to be brought before him in a litter. The ransom for his life was paid by the father and mother of the maiden, the former being an Iberian noble and the latter a Carthaginian lady.

When they were all assembled together before him, Scipio handed over the ransom that had been paid for his life to Allucius as a wedding portion, and ordered the father and mother to have the wedding celebrated at once between him and the lovely Idalia, without even waiting for his recovery from his wound.

The fame of this action soon spread throughout all Spain and inclined the Iberians greatly to Scipio; but whether he

would have acted thus had it not been for his own great love for Elissa, no man can tell.

The next few days were passed by the young Roman general in making arrangements about his prisoners, of whom he disposed in various ways, generally acting with great leniency to the Iberians, and pressing all the surviving soldiers of other nationalities into his own navy, thus largely augmenting his Of such men and women as were made slaves he made a suitable disposition, rewarding his generals and tribunes with the best of each. And thus Cleandra was presented to Caius Lælius and the other women in the palace were disposed of according to rank and beauty to the higher nobles in the army. Of Elissa there was no word said, but it was understood as a matter of course that she belonged to Scipio himself. she treated with all honour. As Lælius remained in the palace with Scipio, she still had her friend Cleandra to minister to her; and Scipio himself, much as he longed to see her face again. refrained entirely from intruding upon her privacy.

One woman there was however in the palace for whom neither the general nor the admiral felt any goodwill, and this was the Princess Cœcilia. Young Marcus Primus being dead, there was now none to speak for her, and both Scipio and Lælius resented the knowledge of the fact that never could the battlements have been so easily surmounted or the city captured by the passing of the lagoon had it not been for the treachery of that woman towards her niece Elissa.

Therefore, at the instance of Lælius, his original proposition, made in jest at the camp of Tarraco, was carried out. It was resolved that she should be married to the chief boatswain of the flag-ship. This man's name was Valerius, and he was a most truculent-looking ruffian, of great size. He was much renowned for his bloodthirstiness in action, but was a good sailor, and extremely feared by all in authority under him.

To him then was the Princess Cocilla offered as his wife by his chief, Caius Lælius. He was given to understand that a lady of such high rank was offered to him as a reward for his bravery in the storming of the town. When, moreover, he was promised a considerable dowry of her own money, as well as her person, he was both flattered and delighted. He could not speak any language save Latin, and of that tongue his intended bride did not understand a word. For the diversion of the nobles in the palace, the marriage was, despite the pitiable lamentations of the unwilling bride, celebrated one day with much festivity and license, for much wine was purposely given to the seamen at the feast that the traitress might be made to feel her punishment the more. And when night fell the now drunken boatswain carried off his bride, who had been forced to attire herself with great splendour, from the palace, where she had lived for so many years, to a mean fisherman's cottage by the port. She had been given to Valerius for the purpose intentionally, that she might be able to reflect therein at leisure upon the vicissitudes of life, of which her treachery to her piece had been the direct cause, and of her own repeated acts of folly that had led to the treachery. Elissa, who was aware of what was about to take place, had, although the princess had begged her in their sole interview to intercede on her behalf, refused absolutely, with the utmost scorn and loathing to doso. She had moreover, reproached her bitterly with being the cause of all the bloodshed and of the loss of the town and of the enslavement of them all. In conclusion, she informed Cœcilia that, should she open her lips to mention her name to Scipio, it would not be to ask for a reconsideration of the matter of her marriage. but only to beg that he would inflict some far more terrible punishment.

This was the last time that Elissa and Cœcilia ever met, and from this time forth the princess disappears entirely from this history, for her subsequent fate is unknown. One thing only is certain, that when Caius Lælius sometime later sailed for Italy, the boatswain did not take his wife with him. So it is probable that he had either drowned her in the gulf, wrung her neck, or sold her into slavery.

CHAPTER VII.

A RENUNCIATION.

A FEW days after the marriage of the boatswain to the unworthy Princess Cœcilia, Elissa was able to rise from her couch and attire herself with Cleandra's aid. Very miserable and down-hearted was she when, looking forth from that same window whence some years before she had seen the fleet of the treacherous Carthaginian Adherbal, she could now see nought but warships flying the Roman standard. Looking towards the battlements, she saw now, instead of Carthaginians, only Roman soldiers pacing up and down in their coats of mail, or resting upon their long pikes and looking out over the walls. Upon gazing from another window first towards the citadel and then to the hill of Æsculapius, she saw flying from both, instead of the white horse on the purple ground, the Roman eagle proudly displayed.

She groaned aloud and beat her breast, then covering her eyes, burst into a flood of weeping.

"Oh, Cleandra!" she cried, "it is then indeed a reality, a sad reality! During my great sickness I have thought almost that 'twas but a bad dream. But those Roman ensigns, those Roman soldiers everywhere, are, alas! too convincing. Oh, why are the gods so cruel? Why was I ever born to experience such bitter and great humiliation? Oh, hast thou no poison concealed with which I may end my miserable existence forthwith, rather than live another day to witness my country's shame and endure mine own dishonour? Give me but a dagger or a sword that I may slay myself, for live I cannot! I long for instant death."

"Nonsense, dear Elissa," said Cleandra, "To talk of death at thine age is but folly. Thou must live, if only in the hopes that the day may come when thou shalt see fortune's wheel spin back the other way again. Thou must live if only for the sake of thy country, to whom thou mayst bring some succour living, but to whom thou wilt be assuredly most useless dead-Besides, I have no poison to give thee, nor is any weapon at hand. All such have been carefully removed by Scipio's orders."

"Then, wouldst thou, Cleandra, have me live to see me the slave of Scipio? I, Elissa, daughter of Hannibal, how could I ever survive the terrible indignity? Nay, if there be no poison, if there are no arms, I can yet cast myself from the walls, and I will do so even now."

Springing forward and opening the door of her apartment, she ran down a corridor, pursued by Cleandra begging her to stay. However, she found the end guarded by Roman soldiers, who respectfully, but firmly, barred her way. Elissa then turned down another corridor which led to a side exit into the garden. There again she found Roman guards. It was now occupied as the barrack-room of the officers' attendants, the sleeping apartments of some of the generals and superior officers leading out on either side from the corridor.

Caius Lælius himself, hearing a disturbance, came forth.

"What is the matter, Cleandra?" he inquired, seeing that the girl was supporting in her arms the pale-faced and unhappy Elissa, who was leaning back panting against a wall. "I fear that Elissa is distraught, Cleandra," he continued; "lead her back carefully to her apartment, and see to it that thou dost watch her well."

Lælius spoke kindly but as one in authority to Cleandra, for she was now his slave. And he gave Cleandra assistance in taking the unhappy girl back to her apartment, where he left her under Cleandra's care.

Cleandra sought to console her.

"Listen, Elissa, thou saidst but now that thou couldst not survive the indignity of being Scipio's slave. How think ye

do I survive, then, the indignity of being the slave of the Roman Lælius? If I find Caius Lælius kind and considerate to me, whom he hath never seen before, how much more kindness and consideration hast not thou to expect from Scipio? He, it is well known, loves the very ground thou walkest on, and would formerly, hadst thou but been willing, have made thee his wife. Thy fate can, therefore, whatever it be, in no ways be so very terrible. Would to the gods, I say, that thou hadst but listened to him over there at the Court of King Syphax. Then, instead of being in the hands of enemies, we should all have been happy together here as friends, and thou, Elissa, mightest have been Scipio's wife and queen of all Iberia. For even now the Iberians are commencing to hail him as their king."

"The fickle populace, Cleandra," replied Elissa, partly recovering herself, and sitting on her couch, "will ever follow success. Had I but defeated Scipio, which, alas! was quite impossible with the means at my command, they would have doubtless proclaimed me queen of Iberia. 'Tis useless talking of such things. Nought now am I, who was so much formerly, but a slave girl, subject to the will of Scipio. And I love Maharbal."

"Who scarce can love thee as doth Scipio," interposed Cleandra; "and 'twould, indeed, be more like the truth, Elissa, wert thou to say that thou didst thyself formerly love Maharbal. and that thou now lovest the recollection of thy love for For how canst thou love him now? 'Tis nearly Maharbal. five years since thou hast seen him, and but one letter hast thou received from him in all those years. Love under such circumstances is an impossibility, unless it be filial love or fraternal love. A feeling of honour, which is to be commended in thee, may make thee fancy that ye still belong to each other; yet 'tis misplaced. For what are the facts as I have learned them from Cœcilia? Taking the law into thine own hands, thou, when a mere girl not yet seventeen, didst give thyself unto Maharbal, and, contrary to thy father Hannibal's. wishes and without his consent, didst call thyself his wife. That marriage was never ratified. Therefore, what art thou,

after five years have elapsed, to Maharbal? Again, thine uncle Mago did inform thee that when Hannibal offered to let Maharbal return and espouse thee, he did refuse, and elected rather to remain in Italy. Therefore, what can he be to thee?"

"Yet am I bound to him in honour, and so must I ever consider myself, until either I learn of his death, or until he of his own free will shall give me up."

Elissa answered thus somewhat doubtingly, for she was beginning to feel the force of Cleandra's arguments, which had doubtless often occurred to herself.

But Cleandra continued: "I maintain, Elissa, that thou art in no wise bound to Maharbal, and I would impress upon thee that much canst thou do for Carthage even yet by living, since this great Roman General Scipio loves thee. And that he is in turn one worthy to be loved is proved by his conduct with reference to Idalia, whom he relinquished as he did, doubtless, for thine own sake alone."

Elissa sprang to her feet, the colour, for the first time for days, returning to her cheek.

"And 'tis this very love that Scipio bears to me that I do so dread, Cleandra! For, loving me, how will he spare me now? And I, too, may the gods forgive me, may perchance—" She paused and clutched her breast convulsively. "Nay," she continued, after a pause, "I will not say what I do not know, and that which, did I know it for certain, were best unsaid. My love is for Maharbal, and my duty is to him—to him alone."

And she sank back upon her couch, and would speak no more. For she was half convinced by Cleandra, and the longer the conversation continued the less convinced was she with what she maintained herself, therefore she wisely thought that her best refuge lay in silence.

Shortly afterwards, Scipio, who had been exercising his troops, returned to the palace. Being informed by Lælius of what had occurred, he was very much concerned and alarmed for Elissa's welfare. For there was nothing that he dreaded

more than that she might in a fit of desperation take her own life.

His anxiety to see once more this woman, who was the darling of his heart, had now become unbearable. Accordingly, sending her in some choice dishes and wine by the hands of a female slave, he, with many salutations, requested permission to visit her alone in the evening.

"Tell Scipio that his slave is at the disposal of his lordship's orders, for that Elissa hath now no free will of her own."

This was the ungracious message that he received in return for his kind words.

Nevertheless, he accepted it as the required permission, and in the evening, when the day's work was over, repaired to her apartment, where he found her attired, without ornaments of any sort, in the utmost assumed humility.

The interview between them was long and harrowing. Scipio assured her of his love as before, and by all the gods conjured her even yet to be his bride. Every argument that he could think of he brought to bear, and he spoke, too, with all the modesty of a diffident lover, with none of the arrogance of a conqueror. He was so noble in his bearing, so honestly genuine in his immense love for her, that Elissa, who had begun by insulting him, was at length moved. The tears came to her eyes, her bosom heaved, it burst upon her that she too loved him, enemy of her country though he might be. Her hardness melted, and she almost confessed it. Rising, she stretched out her arms to him.

"Oh, Scipio!" she cried, "why art thou so generous, so kind unto me? Oh! what wouldst thou of me? Is it to tear my heart in pieces that thou art come to me thus? and wouldst thou have me own—oh! Scipio, that I also, in defiance of all honour—" Then she suddenly recovered herself, all her pride returning, she dropped her arms to her side, and with the stony look of a statue upon her face, continued: "Forgive me, my lord, that I address thee thus familiarly; I am forgetting myself, indeed. There can be no question be.

tween me and thee of my feeling ought but obedience. Thou dost desire thy slave thou sayest, then take thy slave—she is here before thee to obey thy behest, thou canst make of her thy toy, thy plaything, if thou choosest. The body thou canst indeed take, but not the soul; thy will is my law, and I must obey; but my soul will not suffer, for while thou canst take thy slave at thy will, know this, that the soul of Elissa, av, the real Elissa herself, can never be thine. All that is divine, all that cometh as the attribute of the gods to make a human woman worth the possessing by a noble man, that is what thou canst never have, for it is given and belongeth to another for ever. 'Tis not for thee. Take me then, my lord, shouldst thou so choose, and great will be thy victory." She gave a low, mocking laugh, and then, with drooping head, resumed her attitude of humility before him: and thus she provoked him.

Driven to madness, especially after having witnessed the tender, indeed the passionate, glance when, in her recent ebullition of feeling, Elissa had seemed on the very point of confessing her love to him, Scipio sprung forward and seized her in his arms, holding her madly, violently.

"By all the gods of Olympus and Hades," he cried bitterly, "thou shalt then be mine, Elissa, soul or no soul! What thou sayest thyself is true, thou art my slave, and must obey me. Keep thou that divine attribute which thou dost deny to me for thine accursed Maharbal, and I will take what there is left. "Tis, in sooth, fair enough for my heaven; I would not have the Elyssian maids themselves more fair than thee."

Convulsively he pressed her in his arms, and wildly sought her lips with his own.

No resistance made Elissa, only when in his violent embrace Scipio hurt her wounded shoulder, she uttered a low cry of pain. Scipio instantly released her, and was at her feet in a moment, all his better instincts returning.

"Oh! do I hurt thee, my beloved? Pardon me, I pray thee, for my utter brutality. May the Olympian Jove himself punish me for my momentary wickedness, yea may the beloved Venus in her divine mercy forgive me for this sacrilege of her

most wondrous work, thy lovely person. For know this, Elissa, I vow by all the gods of both Rome and Carthage that I would not willingly harm a single hair of thy head. It is not thus indeed that I would have thee, and I did lie to thee just now. For 'tis, indeed, my whole heart and soul which are burning with passion, it is that spiritual part of thee which thou dost deny me that I would possess rather even than the earthly tenement wherein it is contained. Now wilt thou forgive me, dear one, and give me but that one little word of love I saw trembling on thy lips a short while since?" He pressed her hand tenderly, and never had he looked more noble than at that moment.

But Elissa would not melt. She looked down without the slightest change upon her stony features.

"I have said all I have to say, my lord. I told thee that I am thy slave; I now tell thee, Scipio, that I do not love thee. But I am thine, if thou so will it, according to the promise I made to thee in Numidia."

Scipio rose to his feet, dropped her hand, and spoke with great and self-contained dignity.

"Then be it so, Elissa; thou art my slave—nothing more! but never shall it be said that a Scipio knew not how to master himself, nor how to treat even an unwilling slave-girl with respect." And he left her.

When he was gone, Elissa's whole face changed. With the agony of despair she threw herself upon her knees, and buried her face in the cushions.

"Oh, Melcareth! great and invisible Melcareth! forgive me the lie!—forgive me the lie! For I love him, and thou who hast made me as I am dost know it. But mine honour forbade me to utter the word that would have made both him and me happy—oh, so happy! Oh, Tanais! thou, too, goddess of love, forgive me the dreadful lie!" and she wept bitterly.

And thus on her knees Cleandra found her some time after. For, as frequently happens to good women, the unhappy Elissa, in striving to do that which according to her conscience

seemed to her to be right, had unjustly inflicted equal suffering upon herself and upon the man who adored her.

After this painful interview Scipio saw very little of the captive Elissa, whom, however, he ordered to be treated with the greatest deference, in no way taking advantage of the situation to treat her, as she herself had demanded, as a mere slave.

He himself, while constantly exercising the men under his command in military tactics, was always thinking how he should dispose of her person. For all hopes of making her his wife with her own consent were, to his great distress of mind, at an end, and his character was too noble to admit of his taking her in any other way.

The soldiers at this period suffered considerably from the morose humour into which he fell, and there was no end to their exercisings and drillings. By these incessant occupations, however, he soon got his army into a most excellent state of training, and then he determined to march northward again to Tarraco, and prosecute the war against Hasdrubal and Mago. At length he made up his mind about Elissa.

Summoning his friend Caius Lælius before him one day, he spoke as follows:

"Caius, thou hast been my dearest companion from earliest boyhood, and from thee I have no secrets. Therefore, it is nothing new to tell thee the great unhappiness with which it hath pleased the gods to afflict me, owing to the immense and fruitless love that I bear to the Carthaginian maiden. Now. having communed with the gods and offered sacrifices, I plainly see that her continued presence anywhere near me is enervating to me, both as a man and a warrior, rendering me unfit to continue in the command of a large body of troops, and to properly protect the destinies of our nation. I have therefore, my friend, determined to send her away from me entirely, and thou must take her. When I march northward to Tarraco the fleet also will return thither. The exception will be thine own vessel and two others to form thine escort. On the former thou shalt take Elissa and thine own slave girl, Cleandra. On the two other ships will be embarked the Carthaginian Captain Mago, who surrendered the citadel to us, and fourteen others of the superior officers whose names I have noted. They are to be divided between the two ships, and kept, by all means, from access with Elissa, that there may be no chance of any combination between them to escape or to raise a tumult on board.

"Thou wilt sail hence in two days' time, and as the war between Carthage and Rome hath now broken out with great and renewed fury in Sicily, thou wilt first of all, taking all due precaution, visit the Sicilian ports of Panormus, Lilybæum, Agrigentum, and Syracuse, and acquaint the Roman consuls. or the commanders now in possession of or besieging those places of our great success here. Should they be able to spare any troops to reinforce us, then point out to them the advisability of sending us forthwith as many men as possible, in order that I may complete the conquest of Spain, and, above all things, be able to prevent Hasdrubal from marching to Italy. For I have information that he is thinking of leaving the defence of Iberia to his brother Mago, himself following in his brother Hannibal's footsteps, and marching through Gallia and over the Alps to reinforce Hannibal, wherever he may be in Italia. After accomplishing these missions, thou wilt sail through the straits, between Messana and Rhegium, and landing at the most convenient port, disembark with thy captives and the spoils of New Carthage which I shall send, and proceed instantly to Rome. There thou wilt acquaint the Senate of all that is needful, and, with their approval, which cannot be withheld, wilt lodge Hannibal's daughter in the house of my mother to remain a prisoner until my return, whenever it may please the gods to allow me to see my native land once more. And. I do beseech thee, for our great friendship's sake, to beg my mother, as she loveth me, to see to it that Elissa's captivity be not made unbearable to her, but that she be treated with all fitting kindness."

"Ay, that will I promise faithfully, Scipio. But stay, I have an idea! Why shouldst not thou hand over the command of

the land forces to me and take the girl thyself? Our rank is so nearly equal that the Senate could say nought. In sooth, I think it would be wiser so; and thou wilt have far more prospect of obtaining new reinforcements when thou dost arrive in person with the news of thy great victory. And then during the voyage, who knows, the girl may relent, and, perhaps, long before its termination, of her own free will throw herself into thine arms. For Cleandra hath informed me—the wench speaks Latin well, by-the-bye—that she doth believe that deep down in her heart this Elissa doth really love thee. It would be a grand opportunity to make sure of her affection."

Scipio's face flushed; he sprang from his seat, and clasped Lælius by the hand.

"And why not, indeed?" he cried; "I thank thee, Caius. Thou art every whit as able a leader of men as am I. Our rank is equal, too; and 'tis true that were I to go in person now, just after taking New Carthage, I should carry greater weight than thee in the matter of the reinforcements. It seemeth not only feasible but right."

Scipio looked happier than he had done for days; he looked like a scholar who had obtained an unexpected holiday. Lælius, who was delighted to see him thus, warmly returned the pressure of his hand.

Alas! Scipio's joy was not long-lived, and the joyous expression soon left his face as reason came to his aid.

"Nay, nay," he continued, with a deep sigh, "it may not be, my dear friend Caius, for, put it which way thou choosest, 'twould be really leaving my post for the sake of a woman. And 'twould surely end most miserably. For supposing the girl were to continue to prove recalcitrant, it could but end in tragedy, perchance in the death of Elissa herself, or mine own suicide, or maybe both. For the madness of this love hath gotten such a hold upon me, I could not bear to live by her side day by day knowing her mine, and yet not mine! I will not risk it, either for my own sake or Elissa's; it would indeed be trying myself too high. 'Tis thou who must take her, and I must suffer here alone."

Thus was the matter decided, and Scipio himself that day communicated his decision to Elissa, in Cleandra's presence. He spoke to her so kindly, so nobly, showing, moreover, so plainly that in this great act of self-abnegation in sending her away he was thinking as much of her as of himself, that Elissa's long-sustained pride broke down. The tears came to her eves.

"Oh, Scipio!" she cried, "would that things might have been different! Yet are we both but the servants of the gods, and must obey the divine will, and bow our heads beneath the almighty hand. Would that I could come to thee with honour, and lay my hand in thine. But thou knowest that with honour I cannot, I may not, do so. And were I known to thee to be a woman without honour, thou wouldst neither love me nor respect me as thou dost now. Moreover, the gods would themselves despise me. But, Scipio, the gods cannot prevent my giving thee a sister's love. And daily for thy great, thy noble treatment of me while here, thy prisoner and thy slave, will I call down upon my beloved brother's head the blessings of the most high and invisible Melcareth, and pray and beseech him to protect thee from all dangers. And now as a sister only will I embrace thee with a sacred kiss."

She threw her arms about his neck, and they stood thus awhile, mingling their tears together, while clinging in a close embrace, which for all Elissa's brave words, could scarcely be deemed that of mere brother and sister.

Cleandra, kind-hearted girl that she was, utterly overcome by this sad and pathetic scene, sobbed audibly in a corner of the chamber.

At length they separated.

Saying, in a heart-broken voice, "I accept the compact, then fare thee well, oh, Elissa, for we must meet now no more," Scipio withdrew.

Two days later, without seeing him again, Elissa embarked upon the flagship with Lælius, and that same day Scipio marched for Tarraco.

PART V.

CHAPTER I.

TO SYRACUSE.

WHEN Elissa left New Carthage, with the prospect before her of becoming a lifelong prisoner in Rome, the war was indeed, as Scipio had said, raging with fury both in Sicily and Italy. For it is a matter of the greatest astonishment how, in spite of the terrible reverses which she had suffered on Italian soil, Rome pulled herself together for renewed efforts, not only in Italy, then occupied by a successful invading army, but for a continuation of the conflict upon foreign shores. Thus she sent forth fleets and armies to Sardinia, to Spain, and to Sicily, and the Carthaginians, encouraged to renewed exertions by the glorious battle of Cannæ, did likewise.

Thus war was being carried on, at the same time, in all parts of the Mediterranean.

It was raging, too, on Numidian soil, where the kings, Syphax and Massinissa, were now fighting against each other.

Scipio had concluded a treaty with Massinissa, who was fighting therefore nominally in the interests of Rome, against Carthage; but, in reality, in rage and disappointment at the loss of the beautiful Sophonisba, whom he had vowed should be his. In the end, Massinissa was eventually successful in a pitched battle against his uncle, the kind-hearted Syphax, whom he slew, and thereupon he seized upon the fair Sophonisba, whom he promptly forced to be his own unwilling spouse.

Scipio, not thinking it was wise that his ally Massinissa should have in his household a Carthaginian wife, sent him a

message that he should send her away to her own country; but rather than lose her, Massinissa presented the unfortunate girl with a cup of poison, and ordered her to drink it.

Remarking placidly that it seemed an inappropriate end for the bride of two kings, but that anything was better than life itself, poor Sophonisba gladly swallowed the poison, and died in agony.

Elissa, while sailing along the coast of Sicily, reflected sadly on this tragedy.

"Such," she thought, "is the fate of humanity, and the ruling of the gods cannot be foretold. Therefore, as in the very hour of greatest prosperity sudden and great reverses may be awaiting us, it behoveth us all never to neglect the service of those omnipotent rulers of our being."

Thus reflected Elissa when she looked back upon her own sudden fall from a position of almost regal rank to the state of a mere prisoner of war being deported to a foreign land.

At this time the war in Sicily centred round the enormous and powerful city of Syracuse, which had, with all its surrounding territory, remained, under King Hiero, an independent kingdom for no less than fifty years past. In the previous Punic war, when every other city in Sicily fell, first to one power then to another, neither Roman nor Carthaginian had ever been able to set foot within its walls. And this was chiefly owing to the wisdom of King Hiero himself, who, after various sieges and conflicts with each power in turn, concluded an alliance with Rome, which he maintained throughout his long reign of fifty years' duration. But Hiero being dead, and succeeded by his grandson Hieronymus, all this was soon changed.

The young king was a debauched youth with an overweening idea of his own importance, and he openly insulted the ambassadors who came to him from Rome to seek a renewal of the old alliance. Insolently asking them, "What account the Romans had been able to give of themselves at Cannæ?" he declared for Carthage.

The city of Syracuse being full of intrigue, some wishing to

remain faithful to Rome, others to attach themselves to Carthage, while all alike were disgusted with the cruelties and debauchery of the young king; the latter was soon assassinated, as were also all the princesses of the royal family, including Hiero's daughter Demarata, and his grand-daughter Harmonia, and their respective husbands Andranodorus and Themistius.

Heraclea, the youngest daughter of Hiero, and her two beautiful daughters were murdered with the greatest brutality, after a terrible struggle; but no sooner were they dead than a messenger arrived from the magistrates who had ordered their murder, but had now relented, to stay the execution, for the very people themselves, who had been thirsting for all the royal blood a short time before, had now turned round upon the magistrates who had ordered the crime and ousted them, calling for the election of new pretors in place of the massacred Andranodorus and Themistius.

And thus it came to pass that two young generals, brothers, named Hippocrates and Epicydes, who were envoys from Hannibal to the Syracusans, came to be elected into power. These two young men were Syracusans themselves on the father's side, but their mother was a Carthaginian, and they had been brought up in Carthage, where Cleandra had known them well while living there with her husband. They had already been at the bottom of the plotting and the counter-plotting against Rome, and although there were still various parties in the city. upon their election, after various vicissitudes and some fighting within the walls, they contrived to completely embroil the whole of the inhabitants with Rome. This was done by Hippocrates openly attacking, with Syracusan soldiers, a body of troops belong to the Roman consul, Appius Claudius, which the latter had sent to protect his allies in the neighbouring city of Leontini. Epicydes also repaired to Leontini, and by specious arguments persuaded the inhabitants of Leontini to rise against Rome.

Meanwhile the other Roman consul, Marcus Marcellus, he who used to be known by the title of "The Sword of Rome"

who was in the vicinity with a large force, demanded from the Syracusans the surrender of the two brothers, who had dared to attack Roman troops while a state of peace, or at all events of truce, existed between Syracuse and Rome. But the Syracusans pretending that they had no authority to give up the two brothers, as they were now in the free city of Leontini, the two Roman consuls attacked the last mentioned city and stormed it. But the two brothers escaped, and with their usual cleverness persuaded the force of six hundred Cretans, who were with the Syracusan force, which, in the Roman interest, had been sent to capture them, to join their own standard against Rome. And the Cretans in turn persuaded the other Syracusan troops to join them also.

Thus had Hippocrates and Epicydes contrived to completely embroil Syracuse with Rome, and when the ships of Caius Lælius with Elissa on board arrived at the port of Syracuse, they found that the gates of the city were shut, and that it was about to be invested both by sea and land by the two Roman consuls, while the two brothers were supreme within the city, and had on their side a large body of Roman soldiers who had deserted to Syracuse.

Throughout the sea voyage of Elissa and Cleandra, Caius Lælius had faithfully kept his promise to Scipio, and treated Hannibal's daughter with the greatest respect and kindness. They had visited in turn various ports upon the coasts of Sicily, and the Roman flag-ship and the two other vessels had on a recent occasion narrowly escaped capture at the hands of a Carthaginian squadron off the seaport of Lilybæum. tunately for Elissa, however, Caius Lælius had, after a seafight, contrived to make good his escape, although he himself had received a severe wound from a sling during the action. By this wound he was for a time quite incapacitated, and thus was confined to his cabin when his ships arrived off Syracuse. Now during the voyage he had become much attached to Cleandra, whom, it may be remembered, knew the Latin tongue well. She was ever about him, nursing him when sick in his cabin, and Lælius, taking no notice of her presence, freely discussed before her the whole state of affairs with his flag captain, an officer by name Labeo Ascanius. Hence she soon learned the whole condition of affairs, and, moreover, that her two friends, the brothers Hippocrates and Epicydes, were in possession of the city of Syracuse.

With her usual quick-wittedness Cleandra soon set about devising a means for the escape of Elissa and herself from the ship; for however kind Lælius might be himself to the two ladies, they were, none the less, prisoners, and likely to be so for life. Their future fate was uncertain; only one thing seemed certain, that they would infallibly be separated from each other upon arrival in Rome.

Now it so happened that not only Caius Lælius but also his flag-captain, Labeo Ascanius, had, during the voyage, become much enamoured of Cleandra, whose beauty had increased rather than diminished during the four or five years which had elapsed since her flight from New Carthage to Old Carthage. While the Admiral Lælius was well, this officer had had no opportunity of expressing his admiration of Cleandra, but she had, none the less, been perfectly well aware of the fact, and had determined, if possible, to utilise it.

Now that his chief was utterly incapacitated and he himself in supreme command, Ascanius had every opportunity of conversing with and making love to Cleandra, who, while using great discretion lest any of the other officers or seamen should observe anything, made opportunities herself, and encouraged him with all the wiles of a clever woman, still, however, keeping him, in a certain measure, at a distance, and not granting all the favours that he sought of her. At length the Roman became, through her artifices, so inflamed with passion that he told her that he would do anything in the world for her sake if she would but be his. Cleandra, not yet sure of him, did not show him her hand, but, the better to bend him to her will, secretly and repeatedly stirred up Caius Lælius against him on various pretexts, and especially by false reports that she gave him about what was going on in the ship during his own illness. Thus Lælius, being rendered peevish by sickness, on several

occasions unjustly found great fault with Ascanius, who became, in turn, incensed against his commander. He did not suspect Cleandra of being the cause of these reports, but his first lieutenant, a man of great probity, named Horatius Calvinus.

At length one day, after Lælius had once again found fault unjustly with his flag-captain, Ascanius, going forth in a rage, accused Calvinus of being the traitor who falsely accused him to the admiral, and, listening to no excuses, put him in irons, treating him with the greatest indignity.

Now was Cleandra's opportunity. She had learned from Labeo Ascanius himself that his own brother, named Caius Ascanius, formerly a centurion in the troops under Marcellus, was among those who had deserted to the Carthaginian flag, and was now with her friends, Hippocrates and Epicydes, in the city. She took good care not to inform Lælius about his flag-captain having put Calvinus in irons, for it suited her better that he should remain there. However, she falsely informed Ascanius in the afternoon that the Admiral had learned the fact, and had announced to her his intention of publicly degrading him on the following morning, and of placing Calvinus over his head.

Then she plainly proposed to him that to escape from such an unjust degradation he should leave the ship that very night and join his brother. He could take her and Elissa with him in a boat, and, under pretence that he was acting under the admiral's orders, and about to deliver them over to Appius Claudius, the Roman Consul commanding the fleet that had just arrived, row them ashore, and land at the city steps in the port. These steps, as could be plainly seen from the ships, were protected by a guard of Carthaginian soldiers. As he would be steersman himself, Ascanius could, she pointed out, easily direct the boat to the steps. She suggested he should only take two men, and they such as were faithful to himself. As a reward for his saving them, Cleandra promised to become his wife so soon as they should land. Thus was the plot laid, and Ascanius agreed willingly to Cleandra's proposals.

That very night, after dark had set in, did Ascanius take

the two ladies, who had with them nought save their jewels, to shore in a boat. And upon their arrival at the steps, and Elissa proclaiming aloud in the Carthaginian tongue her name and quality, she was instantly most warmly welcomed with her companions. Thus was their escape successfully contrived by Cleandra's cleverness, and that night they supped with Hippocrates and Epicydes.

Hippocrates and Epicydes took them to the house of Archimedes, the ancient mathematician, to whose wonderful genius the excellent state of the defences of the city was mainly attributable. Archimedes welcomed them most hospitably, and Cleandra's promise to Ascanius was immediately redeemed by her becoming his wife that very night, his brother Caius and others being invited to the wedding-feast at midnight, when was much festivity. But Cleandra, while thanking her new husband for having rescued her from a life-long slavery, took good care not to inform him by what wiles she had won him to her will. And he, imagining that he had escaped an unjust degradation on the morrow, and being convinced that he had won for his wife the woman whom he loved, and moreover that she loved him with equal passion, felt no qualms of conscience whatever at his desertion from the Roman standard. Even if he had felt any, were not his own brother and hundreds of other Roman soldiers present who had joined the Carthaginian cause without any of the provocation that he had himself received? He had been, for his part, at least so he believed, merely forced to an act of self-preservation.

On the following day Hippocrates appointed Ascanius to a command in his forces, for, as were all the other deserters in the city, he was now so irretrievably committed that nought but crucifixion or torture could be his lot should he ever again fall into the hands of his own compatriots. There was, therefore, no fear of any treachery to Syracuse on the part of the deserters; it was indeed they who, by fighting to the very last, were mainly instrumental in beating off the assailants for a period of at least three years.

In the meantime, the sage Archimedes had welcomed Elissa and her followers within his hospitable walls, and a considerable sum of money for her maintenance was at once voted by the Senate under the direction of Hippocrates and Epicydes. Archimedes occupied a palace in the city proper, which was named Achradina, whereas the port whereon Elissa had landed on the previous night abutted on Achradina, and was known as Ortygia or the island. They were, in fact, two separate towns, each surrounded by a wall. There were, in addition. two large suburbs surrounded by separate walls, and named respectively Tycha and Neapolis, and the whole city was enclosed by an outside wall no less than eighteen miles in circumference; thus some idea can be formed of its size and the difficulty of a besieging force in investing it. There were two harbours, the greater and the lesser, and while Caius Lælius had joined the Roman fleet under Appius Claudius in the lesser harbour, the Carthaginian fleet, under an admiral named Bomilcar, was riding securely at anchor under the walls in the larger one.

Elissa soon learned that, while Marcus Marcellus was threatening the city with a large Roman land force on one side, there were on the other hand, for its protection, a large number of Carthaginian troops, encamped close at hand under the command of a general named Himilco.

There was thus, at first at all events, no danger to be apprehended of the city falling. In fact, the siege had not begun—it was an attempted blockade at best; and by means of the fleet, free communication was, for a considerable time, established with the outside world. Ships were constantly coming and going from both Carthage and Italy, and although there were occasional small sea fights, yet, owing to the preponderance of the Phœnician ships, the port was virtually open.

Being now only about ninety miles away from the city of Carthage, on the opposite African coast, Elissa was sorely tempted to risk sailing thither to visit the land of her ancestors, which she had never yet seen. From taking this step, however, she was dissuaded by the prudent Cleandra, who assured

her that the enemies of her race were far too strong in Carthage for her to venture alone and unprotected within that noble city. For Hannibal's very successes had made the anti-Barcine party more bitter than ever against him.

Elissa was, however, now able to communicate with her father direct, for hearing that the inhabitants of the city of Capua had recently surrendered to him, she wrote to Hannibal there, acquainting him in full of all that had taken place, and of her now being at Syracuse. Moreover she offered, should he see fit, to leave Syracuse and join him at Capua, in which city she learned that he had established himself with his whole army, intending to remain there for the winter.

It was some considerable time before Elissa received from Hannibal any reply to her letter, but it came at length, just as the spring was commencing.

Hannibal's letter, which was written by the hand of his friend and scribe Silenus, was so lengthy that it would be impossible to transcribe it here. In it, however, after applauding her for her bravery upon many occasions, and commiserating with her deeply upon the fall of New Carthage, he informed her that his own army was constantly decreasing in numbers, and was also, to his great annoyance, considerably deteriorated in its quality by the ease and delights which the men had experienced during a whole winter passed in the enervating atmosphere of the pleasure-loving city of Capua. He complained bitterly of the small number of reinforcements that had reached him from Carthage, and urged her to remain in Syracuse, and there, by her presence and example, inspire the garrison and the Carthaginian troops, whether of the land forces under Himilco or the sea forces under Bomilcar, to heroic and continued efforts against Claudius and Marcellus. By this means he pointed out that the Roman troops now in Sicily would be compelled to remain there, and thus be unable to cross over into Italy to assist the Romans in prosecuting the war against himself. He informed her further that unless some reinforcements arrived to help him before long he would soon be obliged to content himself with merely defensive operations at the ports he had already caronnel, but that is that case I would be a matter of great immortance that le should be acie to make an ally of some foreign nower who would be willing to light with him against Rome. And note. he added seemed to him so fitting for this purpose as the young King Philip V. of Macedon, who was now constants engaged in wars of his own in Illyria, or against the various leagues in the Pelcocuments of Greece. These Hamilal pointed out. Philip seemed in a fair way to subdue, and when he had done so, a young prince of so much ambition would doubtless remire a new field whither he might direct his successful arms. Therefore, since it seemed to Hannibal that Elissa by her position on the sea at Syracuse might possibly sooner or later be able to obtain an opportunity of either sending an embassy to Philip, or personally going to meet him. he enclosed a document, giving her full powers on his own behalf to enter into a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with the Macedonian.

In conclusion, Hannibal gave to his daughter news of Sosilus, of Silenus, and Choeras, all of whom, he said, had hitherto survived the hardships of the long-continued war. Of Maharbal he merely said that he continued to be, as formerly, as his own right arm in all matters appertaining to the war, and that he now looked forward to a period when peace might be assured, that he might reward the fidelity of the Numidian general by giving to him her, Elissa's, hand in marriage. Hannibal added that Maharbal was writing to her on his own behalf.

Having read her father's epistle, Elissa turned to her lover's letter.

Within its pages Maharbal breathed forth such unswerving and straightforward devotion, such absolute faith and trust in herself and her integrity and honour, that before it was half finished she thanked the gods a thousand times that they had inspired her with sufficient strength to remain faithful to this man who had been such an invaluable aid to Hannibal in assisting him to maintain ever to the fore the honour and glory

of Carthage. But her cheek burned with shame even as she read. For she realised to her sorrow that whatever honour had prompted her to do in the past or might prompt her to do in the future, she would nevertheless far rather have received those burning lines of love and devotion from the hand of Scipio, the enemy of her father and her country, than from the hand of Maharbal, the brave upholder of her country's honour and her father's life-long friend. But such is life, and such are the hearts of women, and despite her burning cheek Elissa knew that since she had ever behaved most straightforwardly and honourably by her absent lover she had done Maharbal no wrong.

Just after she received these letters, the investment of Syracuse by the Romans was commenced with great determination on the land side and the sea side alike. Thus was no opportunity given to Elissa for any reply, neither did she have any means at her command for establishing any understanding with Philip of Macedon.

CHAPTER II.

FROM STRACESE TO MACEBOX.

Ascenneses, the great mathematician, was a little old man. now nearly ninety years of age. He, however, maintained to the full all his powers, both physical and mental. seemed to have in his frame the strength of a man not much over fifty, while his brain was by far brighter and clearer than that of any of the young men of the more modern schools. In appearance his eye was bright, his cheek rosy, while his face. although wrinkled, was not by any means wrinkled to excess He was alert and active on his feet, scarcely ever seemed to require any rest, and not only enjoyed a healthy appetite, but could, when occasion required, sit up late and join the young bloods of the day in a carouse, without seeming to feel any ill effects upon the morrow. He was, at the time of Elissa's visit. married, for the third time, to a young wife, and he had sons well advanced in middle age, employed in every branch of the Government service.

He had been the counsellor of King Hiero during the whole of that monarch's reign of fifty years' duration, and, owing to his own abilities and the munificence of his royal master, Archimedes had, during that long period, been able to bring the defences of the city of Syracuse to a state of perfection little dreamt of by its enemies. Such was the old man whose abilities the Roman leaders had not taken into account before they so lightly entered upon the siege of the fairest city in the whole of Sicily. However, they soon found out, by experience, that one man's genius is sometimes more effective than mere numbers.

A terrible plague had been raging for some time in both 318

armies before the Romans attempted to push the attack home, and this plague had attacked the defenders and the outside Carthaginian troops far more severely than it had the Romans themselves, for the land forces of the latter were encamped upon higher and better ground, while the sailors on the ships, by keeping out to sea, did not suffer so severely. It had, nevertheless, been an awful time for both parties, and for a long while terror and absolute desolation had reigned supreme. At length, however, the plague abated, after committing the most awful ravages, during which the rotting dead lay piled in unburied heaps, alike in the streets of the city and the interior of the several camps. But before it had abated nearly all the Carthaginian land forces were dead, and both the generals, Himilco and Hippocrates, were among those who had been carried off.

Archimedes and Epicydes were untouched, nor did either Elissa or Cleandra suffer from the contagion. The husband of the latter, Ascanius, however, was among those who had succumbed, and thus was the fair Cleandra once again a widow.

Before long the old man, Archimedes, was left in sole command at Syracuse, for Epicydes, having embarked on board a ship, and joined the fleet with Bomilcar, the Carthaginian admiral, endeavoured to induce him to attack the Romans, But Bomilcar, instead of fighting, fled upon the first approach of the Romans, under Marcellus, off Cape Pachynum, without striking a single blow.

Hereupon Epicydes, being ashamed to return to Syracuse, took refuge in the town of Agrigentum, all his mighty hopes being foiled in a moment. And now some of those within the walls wished to deliver the town over to Marcellus. But Elissa stirred up the remaining Carthaginians in the garrison, and the Roman deserters and the mercenaries, so that they would not hear of surrender, and old Archimedes himself declared that he would destroy with infinite torture, by some newly-invented device of his own, any such as he should discover in treating with the enemy. No terms could be therefore made by the malcontents.

As the ships under Claudius were just preparing to attack, Archimedes took Elissa with him round the walls, showing her all the ingenious devices which his brain had imagined and contrived. The walls were crowded with trained men ready to obey his behest. And as the old man showed her all his inventions, she groaned aloud.

"Why dost thou groan thus, oh Lady Elissa?" inquired Archimedes, smiling. "Thinkest thou that I have not here got together sufficient engines of defence wherewith to smash up and repel all such engines of offence as the Romans can bring wherewith to batter down these walls? Forgive me if I differ from thee, for I think that should not treachery from within show them the way to the kernel, they will find Syracuse the hardest nut that ever they had to crack."

And he smiled again, as he tried the working of a lever to one of his machines, and turning, casually ordered a workman to give it a little oil.

"Nay, my lord Archimedes! it was no such thought as that, but the contrary, that made me groan," replied Elissa. "I groaned because I had thee not with me when Scipio attacked my city of New Carthage, for hadst thou but been there the town could never have fallen."

"Maybe, maybe," said the old man, looking pleased; "but come, let me show thee the working of the engines. These thou seest are a series of catapults constructed to suit every range. Let us try them to see if they go well."

An infinite number of missiles of every size had been carefully constructed for years past, and these were all lying ready to hand.

The Roman fleet were anchored in the port at a distance from the walls which they thought perfectly safe, but the old man with his keen eye detected a ship that was a little closer than the others.

"Ha, ha!" he said, rubbing his hands, "they think themselves safe, but my No. 1 catapult here is suited to that range exactly."

Causing a huge mass of metal to be placed on the propeller

of the catapult, and personally adjusting the weapon, Archimedes caused the spring to be released. Instantly the ten talents of lead flew hurtling through the air, and alighting on the deck of the ship, not only crushed two men in its fall, but knocked a hole clean through its further side, through which the water commenced to rush in. In a few moments, hardly allowing time to permit the terror-stricken crew to take to the boats, the ship sunk.

"Excellent!" quoth the old man. "What dost think of that for accuracy, lady Elissa? Now let us try some of the smaller catapults. Those boats are rowing in nearer to us, thinking in error that my engines are only contrived for long distances. We will try, therefore, a No. 2 and a No. 3 catapult with smaller missiles made to suit the range."

Again two weapons were discharged, and now two boats were sent to the bottom, the sailors after struggling for a few minutes sinking also.

"They will do, they will do!" cried the old man, in glee; but catapults are, after all, but an old device. Now will I show thee something new, for as thou dost perceive, all the ships of the enemy, being irritated by me, now are rowing towards the walls to assault, and some of them bear at their bow long and wide ladders, with pent-houses at their ends, which they can rear, by pulleys from the mast-head, against our walls. Others, again, have battering-rams with which to charge the foundations. We can leave those with the long ladders, which the Romans call sambucæ or harps, and pay our attention first to yonder vessel in front with the battering-ram. See, it approaches us. Now, my men, ready with the crane. Swing round!"

As the ship, propelled by the rowers, came quite close to the wall, a huge crane swung easily round on a pivot. A heavy chain hung from its end, to which was attached a huge pair of open hands formed of iron. These hands descended above the prow of the doomed vessel.

"Press!" cried Archimedes.

Instantly the iron hands seized the prow of the vessel in an iron grip.

"Raise!" cried Archimedes.

At once, by the mechanism of the machine, the prow of the vessel was raised clean up into the air, all the sailors on deck tumbling off the stern into the sea.

"Fasten!" cried the old man.

The ship remained fastened thus in a bolt upright position, the sailors meanwhile drowning all around its stern.

"Let go!" cried the old mechanician.

A spring was pressed, the iron hands relaxed their grip, and the bow of the ship fell back into the sea with a terrible splash. The ship at once filled with water and sunk, all of the rowers between decks being drowned.

"Two ships already! not bad for a beginning! Now let us pay attention to the sambucæ or harps. Thou seest, lady Elissa, that the wide ladders are reared from the outer bulwarks of two ships lashed close to each other, the oars on the inner sides being removed. There are already four men standing protected, with removable shields, in the pent-house, while many more are waiting to rush up as soon as those four men step forth upon our battlements. We will let them approach, and then they shall see that 'tis not so easy to storm Syracuse."

In another minute two ships bearing a sambuca came quite close to the battlements, at a point where there seemed to be no engines of defence to resist the attack. For none were indeed visible.

No sooner had the pent-house been placed against the wall than a hundred men commenced swarming up the wide ladder, while the four men in the pent-house at the top removed the shields in front of their platform preparatory to springing on to the battlements.

"Raise and discharge!" cried Archimedes.

In a second an engine, hitherto concealed, reared itself from behind the walls, swung over the top of the pent-house, and released an enormous stone some half-ton in weight.

This stone smashed through the roof of the pent-house,

carried those within it and all the armed men on the ladder down with it in a mangled and bleeding mass, and then, falling upon the fore-part of one of the vessels, inflicted serious damage to the ship.

Instantly, in the greatest consternation, the two ships backed their oars and retreated, being pursued by discharges from catapults at successive ranges, and fired at also by numberless scorpions concealed behind the walls, through which small holes had been constructed at the height of the decks of the ships to enable the scorpion-bearers to fire, without themselves being seen or liable to injury.

The action had now become general. On every side Roman ships were advancing, and soon all the engines of every kind upon the walls facing the harbour were in full play. At length, after a most terrible loss in both men and ships, the remains of the Roman fleet retreated in disorder, well out of range.

Thus did Archimedes show Elissa his methods for efficiently protecting a walled city from assault by sea.

On the land side Marcellus was making a combined attack, and attempting to storm the walls with scaling ladders. But there also Archimedes had engines of every description, and his iron hands struck terror into the stormers by seizing them, all iron-clad as they were, and, after poising them for awhile in mid-air, letting them fall again, when they were crushed to pieces. At length, the besiegers on the land side also fell back utterly disheartened, all their battering-rams and every other kind of weapon of offence being destroyed, while quantities of their number lay dead or dying at the foot of the walls.

After a few more attempts at storming the town, which were invariably repelled in a similar manner, any further attempt at taking the city by a coup de main was utterly abandoned by the Roman generals. After this they only maintained a close blockade. Thus for several years did Syracuse maintain its freedom; but at length, after the inhabitants being nearly starved, the city fell by treason from within. For a certain Mericus, a Spanish governor of one of the forts, disclosed to the enemy that a three days' feast in honour of Diana was

ordained, and that Epicydes, who had returned to the city, had directed that a large quantity of wine should be served out to every one of the defenders for want of food. Thus, when all the garrison were drunk, from drinking without eating, the walls of the suburb were stormed near Hexapylos without resistance, and many of the garrison were slaughtered in their drunken sleep. Achradina, being held by deserters and the mercenaries, did not, however yet yield, and many most terrible and bloody counter-attacks were made upon the Romans by gallant sallies, headed in person by Elissa. At length, Epicydes having fled, the principal inhabitants attempted to yield up the city to Marcellus, whereupon the deserters and mercenaries attacked the Syracusan prætors, and others who were traitors, and slew them.

But now Mericus the Spaniard opened by night the gates of his post in Achradina, which was situated near the fountain of Arethusa, and let the Romans in. Although the consul Marcellus had given instructions that the life of Archimedes was to be spared, an ignorant and brutal soldier slew him as he was leaning over his table intently studying a problem.

After fighting in the streets at the head of a body of faithful Spanish mercenaries until half of their number were slain, Elissa made her way successfully down to the great port, where she embarked with the remainder upon a quinquereme which she had duly prepared in advance, and whereon, fearing the worst, she had already some days past caused Cleandra to embark with all their money and valuables. And it being still dark, they were able, by rowing very gently, to pass unperceived through the ships of the Roman fleet and so to make the open sea. Then, heading eastward, a strong west wind aiding, they made for Greece. Sailing round the south of the Peloponnesus, they arrived without mishap at the port of Nauplia.

Learning at that place that King Philip of Macedon had, after first finishing a campaign against the Ætolians, just returned from the celebrated Nemean games, and was now at the adjacent town of Argos, Elissa repaired thither with all her

men. Sending forward a herald several miles in advance, she demanded an audience of the young king. This, from having long since heard by repute of the great beauty of Hannibal's daughter, he was only too glad to grant, and at once sent back heralds in return with friendly messages and assurances of good will, informing Elissa that he would himself in an hour's time ride forth to meet her.

Now this Philip was one of the most libertine of all the Macedonian kings, and his allies in war, the people of Argos, were at this very time only too anxious to be rid of him. But, owing to his power and the necessity they were then under of protection, they were unable to ask him to go, but had to make the best of things as they were.

Having decked herself with her most becoming raiment and adorned her person with many beautiful jewels, Hannibal's daughter, with Cleandra and her Spanish soldiers, marched forward towards the Macedonian camp outside Argos.

Elissa was welcomed with great pomp and ceremony by King Philip, who, in all his royal robes and insignia, and attended by all his courtiers, advanced to meet her from his magnificent camp, of which the the tents were made of purple silken fabrics interwoven with gold. He welcomed Hannibal's daughter as one herself of royal blood.

Philip was a young man of most god-like beauty, and his strength of sinew, his perfection of face and form, were almost unrivalled by any man then living. When he came forth to meet Elissa outside his camp he was mounted on a splendid and richly-caparisoned war-horse, and surrounded by his courtiers. Further, in order to do Elissa still greater honour, he had commanded the attendance of Polycratia, who, while nominally Philip's queen by marriage with him, was in reality the wife of one Aratus, from whom she had been illegally divorced. Polycratia appeared in a gorgeous and most commodious litter, of which the frame was of silver, and the cushions of the softest down covered with rose-coloured silk, all being worked through with threads of silver.

After most courteously saluting Elissa, the king presented

her to his queen, with whom he requested her to mount in the litter; Cleandra being placed in another splendid litter with one of the young queen's principal attendants named Chloe.

Owing to the Greek tongue having been so commonly known in all the cities of Southern Iberia, and especially in Gades, whence came her royal mother Camilla, Elissa was able to enjoy the conversation of her host without any need for an interpreter. Greek had indeed been the language which both she and Cleandra had been forced to employ during the whole of their stay in Syracuse.

Thus they were able to converse freely, and as the cavalcade, headed by a band of musicians, returned to the Macedonian camp, the king, leaning over from his beautiful charger, lost no time in complimenting Elissa, with gracefully turned phrases, upon her beauty being greater even than it was said to be by common report.

Elissa smiled at the compliment, and felt pleased at her beauty being thus recognised and applauded by this handsome young king; but Polycratia did not smile. She, knowing the king's fickleness, naturally dreaded a rival in Elissa, for she recognised at once that such beauty as Elissa's was exceptional; while, owing to her exalted rank, she was not a woman of whom the king could merely attempt to make one of his ordinary playthings. A foreboding of evil for herself filled Polycratia from the very first minute she saw Philip endeavouring to charm the new-comer with his honied words.

Upon arrival in the camp a magnificent tent, divided into many apartments, and most luxuriously furnished, which had been already pitched, was appointed to Elissa and Cleandra. When Elissa would have posted a guard of her own faithful Spaniards round her pavilion, Philip would by no means hear of it. Urging that her soldiers were war-worn and weary, and should now be relieved for a while from their military duties, he sent them to be distributed among the troops in different parts of the camp, giving orders for their proper entertainment. And he posted a guard of honour of his own spearmen over

Elissa's quarters. By this show of consideration and kindness Hannibal's daughter was at first impressed and pleased accordingly; but the wily Cleandra, who, during the short time she was in the litter with Chloe, had found out much about the king, viewed this arrangement with much disfavour. as she pointed out to Elissa upon the first opportunity, they were now, from being deprived of their own trusty followers. reduced to the position of two weak women entirely at the mercy of the Macedonian. But Elissa quieted her follower's fears. She pointed out to Cleandra that if the king should have any other than honourable designs towards them, which she doubted, it would not be the presence of some hundred and fifty Iberians in the middle of a large army of Macedonians which would prevent him from carrying them out. All that they could do would be to trust to the king's honour, and she thanked the gods that he had received them so honourably and courteously into his camp. For now, continued Elissa, she had hopes from his kind manner that she might be able to conclude with him the offensive and defensive alliance concerning which Hannibal had written to her.

Elissa and Cleandra were entertained at a feast that evening by the king, and at its conclusion, when Philip was merry with wine, she proposed the alliance to him. At first, being in a good humour, he made no objections whatever to such an alliance, and seemed, indeed, to wish it himself. But, saying that he would talk the matter over further as they went along, he rose, remarking that he would escort her with his guards to her tent; nor would he take any refusal.

When he arrived there, Philip, leaving the guards without, entered with his guest on the pretence of seeing that all his orders had been complied with. Once within one of the inner apartments of the huge tent, he threw himself upon a luxurious divan, begged Elissa likewise to be seated, and suggested to her that she should now send away her waiting-lady, in order that they might discuss matters of State together alone.

Cleandra was therefore sent away, and Elissa was left alone with the king. He had not been alone with her for a minute

before Elissa regretted deeply that she had disembarked at Nauplia or marched to Argos. For, inflamed as he was with wine, the king dropped his mask at once, and made love to her violently. When Elissa, surprised, sought to repel him, he took her in his arms by force, kissed her, and treated her grossly. Never had Elissa been so insulted since the time when she had fallen into the hands of the villain Adherbal. But alas! there was no Maharbal at hand now to protect her.

Furious with rage, Elissa struggled to get free from the king's arms, fighting against him with all her strength, for she would have none of him. At first Philip, being jovial, only laughed good-humouredly at her struggles, but he became angry as she continued to resist him.

Suddenly releasing her from his arms, he exclaimed furiously:
"Very well, my lady Elissa! if thou wilt have none of mine
embraces, neither will I have any of thy treaties." And seizing

the document which she had displayed to him, and which had been sent to her by Hannibal, he tore it into several pieces. Dashing the pieces to the floor, he spurned them with his heel

and flung himself out of the tent in a passion.

Elissa, who had fallen exhausted and panting upon a divan, looked at her torn-up credentials, and realised what she had done. She had deeply offended this powerful monarch, by whose aid she had hoped she might restore the now waning fortunes of Carthage. What should she do now? The early teachings of her father came to her mind. Had he not often told her that in nought was she ever to think of self where the welfare of her country was concerned—that not even personal shame was to be considered in such a case, but that absolutely she was bound under all circumstances to think of her duty to her country alone, of herself not at all. And had not the time nowcome when she must make a great sacrifice? Was she merely for the sake of her own outraged vanity—it might even be outraged honour—to desert her country's cause when such a mighty issue was at stake?

"No!" Elissa cried violently, springing to her feet. "If ever I must sacrifice myself for my country I must sacrifice

elf now, and the gods will forgive me, for 'twill be for the of Carthage."

nus her resolve was made as she realised her duty. And she covered her eyes with her hands and wept softly. For was thinking of Scipio, who loved her so dearly, and whom tnew in her heart she loved, and of the honour and fidelity h she had, despite that new love, preserved in vain for arbal. And she vaguely wished that some such terrible as this now staring her in the face had arisen to make her to the prayers and supplications of a Scipio whom she I and honoured, rather than to the brutal threats and tees of a Philip whom she loathed and despised. But the vas now cast; so calling Cleandra to her, she told her all.

CHAPTER III.

A SACRIFICE.

As in the morning the sight of the crimson and gold hangings of the tent gradually impressed upon Elissa the sense of her surroundings, a weight like lead fell upon her heart; but with a prayer to the gods that they might inspire her with strength to carry out her great and terrible resolve, she rose. A small gong was at hand, she beat upon it for Cleandra; but instead of Cleandra, there entered a stranger.

"Who art thou?" inquired Elissa haughtily, "and where is Cleandra?"

"My name is Chloe, oh lady Elissa, and I have been deputed to thy service by the king. Thine attendant Cleandra was removed hence last night; she hath, by the king's orders, taken up mine own duties as chief lady in attendance upon Queen Polycratia. His Majesty hath charged me with his royal greetings unto thee, and bids me inform thee that at such time as thou shalt be prepared to receive him he will present himself before thy noble presence to inquire for thy welfare."

Elissa's pride and anger rose upon hearing that Cleandra had been taken from her. She was about to give some furious reply when her eye fell upon the torn pieces of paper still lying where the king had spurned them with his foot the previous night, and she refrained. "I am," she murmured to herself, "but as a fly in the web of some poisonous spider, and have, alas! no power to withdraw myself from the trammels of its horrid folds. But though alone and entangled, yet will I be strong."

"Leave me to mine ablutions," she commanded, "and inform thy master that I will see him in an hour's space."

At the appointed hour the sound of martial music heralded he king's approach, while the clanging of arms without denoted the guards saluting. As he entered the tent, the flood of sunlight streamed in with him and lighted upon his figure. The bright beams of morning, shining on his brilliant arms, nade him, as he stood there in all the vigour and beauty of youthful manhood, seem as 'twere the sun-god Apollo himself who had alighted upon earth. But Elissa groaned inwardly, to think that one so noble in his bearing could yet be so atterly ignoble in his life.

She remained standing to receive him, looking at him coldly, and making no sign of any salutation.

"Fair lady Elissa," said the king, "I well see that thou art lispleased with me, and I own with contrition that I greatly leserve thy displeasure. For last night the fumes of the rich ed wine, combined with thine own excessive charms, did nake me forget for a mad moment that I was King Philip thy 10st, and thou the lady Elissa my guest. Wilt thou not pardon me? for deeply do I grieve if I have offended."

"King Philip," replied Elissa proudly, "in sooth thy welcome of me hath not been such as I should have expected from a noble monarch with a glorious name. How anst thou expect forgiveness so soon from a woman whom hou hast so deeply insulted—one, moreover, whose person should be sacred. For she cometh to thee as ambassador from he mighty Hannibal, before whom the power of Rome herself 12th for years past trembled. Therefore, before I say I will orgive thee, tell me what wilt thou do to make amends for nine outraged modesty and dignity. It is a matter for consideration."

Calmly and fearlessly did Elissa stand before him, never linching, but gazing steadily into his eyes, which fell before her own.

Philip hesitated a minute, toying nervously with the hilt of his sword, ere he replied.

"Full amends will I make, fair lady Elissa, if thou wilt but grant me thy pardon and my request."

"What is that request? and what are thy amends, oh

"My request is this, that thou wilt join thy life unto mine to be my companion for good or ill, through fair weather or through foul. My promised amends are these: if thou wilt but assent to become for me thus the one woman in the world whose sweet companionship shall make earth heaven, I will bind myself in turn, by solemn treaties before the gods, to help Hannibal, thy father, with all my forces by land and by sea. I will bind myself to attack the Romans wherever I can find them, to fall upon and destroy their cities and their colonies, and, moreover, to send a large body of troops to reinforce Hannibal himself. And thou, sweet lady Elissa, shall draft the terms of the treaty, which shall, so soon as we are united, be sent by ambassadors to Hannibal himself to ratify."

Elissa concealed her rising anger, and answered calmly:

"Good, my lord king; but how can I accept this dishonour, for such it is, and become thy life companion when thou hast a bride already? What wilt thou do with the Queen Polycratia, the noble lady who but yesterday received me so courteously? For know this, oh Philip! that however she may fall, the daughter of Hannibal will, nevertheless, take no second place. Nay, should she listen to thine unscrupulous proposal, she will yet hold the place of queen, and queen alone. There cannot be two queens; and whate'er may be her ties, any other woman must give way before Elissa."

"Polycratia, 'tis true, must be got rid of," replied the young king brutally; "but that is easy. Although I made her queen, she is not really my wife, but the wife of one Aratus, from whom I took her. Thus 'tis simple enough. I will send her back to her husband Aratus, and by so doing shall I greatly please this unruly nation of the Achæans. Thus, fair lady Elissa, thou wilt alone reign queen of my heart, and there will be no other to dispute thy sway in Macedon."

"And thinkest thou, oh Philip, that Polycratia will be happy thus? But, after all, what is she to me? A woman myself, I cannot seek to rule the fate of other women; yet would I strive

to rule the fate of Carthage and to injure Rome, otherwise I had not listened for a moment to thine unworthy proposals. Therefore, King Philip, hearken! If thou wilt send away thy queen, and if thou wilt make a treaty as I shall dictate, then, when I have actually seen, with mine own eyes, the departure of the ambassadors to Hannibal, will I, as my share of the bargain, vield unto thee myself, and become the minister of thy will. But ere these things be accomplished, seek not again to intrude upon my privacy; and, above all things, beware of again taking advantage of my defenceless position to insult me. For seest thou this dagger which I have concealed about me? Had I thought on it last night when thou wast brutally illtreating me, thou hadst assuredly been slain. But by Melcareth. ruler of the universe! if thou dost, before the despatch of this treaty of alliance—to obtain which I must sacrifice mine honour-but so much as lay a hand on me, I will assuredly slay myself with this weapon. For although I may consent, solely seeking the welfare of my country, to give myself to thee. think not that I do love thee, Philip. Nay, far from it! I do scorn and despise thee, king as thou art!"

Elissa's nostrils quivered with nervous emotion and angry scorn as, with the dagger uplifted in her hand, and her head thrown back, she gazed upon the king with determined glance and flashing eyes.

Philip was cowed by her demeanour, but he would have liked to have seized her in his arms once more even then had he dared.

"Oh, never mind the love," he said, smiling; "that will come later. Other women have said that before thee—ay, even this very Polycratia herself did speak just so. But thine assent is the important thing, and that is now settled; it is therefore a bargain between us. Now what may I do to please thee?"

Elissa turned from the king in utter disgust as she thought of her long and steadfast faith to Maharbal, of her pure but fruitless love for Scipio, both now to be sullied and polluted by the surrender of her person to this satyr of a king. And inwardly a great cry rose up in her heart. "Oh, Hannibal, my father, thy precepts have cost me dear!"

"This thou canst do to please me, King Philip," she exclaimed freezingly. "Remove thyself from my sight until such time as I have to endure thy presence whether I will or no."

Turning her back upon Philip she left the apartment. But the king laughed aloud, utterly careless of her feelings.

A few days later the treaty was completed on terms most favourable to Hannibal and Carthage. And when Elissa had actually seen an embassy, headed by one Xenophanes, sail with five ships for Italy, she completed her great, her terrible act of self-sacrifice in her country's cause.

When once the die had been cast, Philip seemed anxious to prove to Elissa that he had been in earnest in concluding for her sake the treaty with Hannibal. He took, within a week or two of the departure of the ambassadors, an irrevocable step, and one which was calculated to embroil him absolutely with Rome. For, having heard that a Roman army, accompanied by King Attalus of Rhodes, and also the Ætolians, had landed on the Peloponnesus to wage war upon the Achæans, with whom he was then allied, Philip took advantage of the occasion, and, without waiting to make any declaration of war, marched out against the Romans in gallant array with all his army.

Falling upon them unexpectedly, he cut all their forces to pieces, and indeed almost annihilated them to a man.

Returning to Elissa, laden with Roman spoils, he laid them at her feet.

Upon seeing this immediate proof of his devotion, Elissa could not help recognising the fact that her self-sacrifice had not been entirely in vain, and she thanked the gods that they had given her the courage to carry it out to the bitter end.

Alas for Elissa! although for long she lived in hope, this first success was also the last. For a series of adverse circumstances coming one upon another utterly frustrated the projects

of Philip to assist Hannibal and to combine with the Carthaginians in a war which, had things gone differently, would, in all probability, have had the result of wiping out the Roman nation and of making Carthage supreme on the Mediterranean coasts. The first piece of bad luck was the falling of Xenophanes and all his embassy into the hands, in the province of Campania, of a certain praetor named Valerius; but that first disadvantage was got over by the lying propensities of Xenophanes. For he, of all the Greeks, was one of the greatest adepts in the ancient art of using the power of speech as a means to conceal his thoughts.

Thus, when arrested by Valerius, he readily admitted that he and his suite were come as ambassadors to Italy, but represented that it was to the Consul Marcus Marcellus, the conquerer of Syracuse, who was now in Italy, that he was accredited. Thus, being believed, he was readily given all the necessary information as to how he should proceed so as to avoid the Hannibalian forces, and allowed to continue on his Owing to the information he had iourney unmolested. received, the wily Greek was enabled easily to avoid any other Roman army, and actually contrived to find Hannibal himself in the province of Apulia. To the great conqueror he safely communicated the treaty and all the letters that he carried from Philip and from Elissa, which he had contrived to conceal about his clothing. Hannibal, while naturally astonished and greatly annoyed at learning that his daughter was now at the court of such a dissolute monarch as Philip, was delighted with the treaty which she had been the means of bringing about, and which, so favourable were the terms to Carthage, he lost no time in ratifying.

Upon his sending back the Macedonian ambassadors, however, accompanied by some Carthaginian envoys to Philip, the whole of the embassy, after arriving safely on board their ships, were detained at sea by a Roman fleet, and once again Xenophanes was taken before Valerius. He, from the Carthaginian envoys, discovered the whole plot, although by his aptitude for lying, Xenophanes had a second time almost escaped.

They all were now taken as prisoners to Rome, where they suffered great tortures and hardships.

Thus, from want of a concerted plan of action. Philip was utterly unable to render to Hannibal the necessary assistance at the required time. Nevertheless, hearing of the capture of his ambassadors, Philip sent fresh envoys to Hannihel and the treaty being ratified, he set to sea with a few ships to try to organise a large fleet of his own vessels, added to some from his Grecian allies and others lying in various ports, with which to harass the whole Italian coast. Unfortunately, owing to the sudden unwarranted fears of his captains, which panic, it is said. even gained upon the king himself, this enterprise proved utterly fruitless. For upon the false alarm that a large Roman fleet was advancing, whereas there were at the utmost only some ten Roman frigates which were lying, themselves fearful of his approach, in a Sicilian harbour, Philip fled precipitately with his ships, and returned to Macedon without striking a blow by sea. For, in sooth, he was no sailor, although a right gallant warrior on land. And the Romans, being reinforced, captured all the ships he would have mustered, and remained completely masters of the sea.

Elissa was not long in learning the facts of this expedition, which Philip had vainly sought to colour to his own advantage, and being furious with herself for having given way to him without having gained any commensurate advantages for her country, and furious also with Philip, she taunted him bitterly, telling him that the only wars in which he was successful were those that he waged upon women.

After this, although Philip remained captivated with Elissa's regal beauty, life became almost intolerable between them. Hannibal's daughter continually stirred the king up with her invectives and reproaches to fresh enterprises; but for want of a sufficient fleet he was unable, after his first naval reverse, to invade Italy, and go to Hannibal's assistance. He therefore contented himself with warlike expeditions by land in all parts of Greece, and even Asia Minor, against all such as were the allies of Rome. But between the Romans and himself there were no

serious conflicts, and, in fact, only a state of semi-warfare existed the Romans being too much employed elsewhere to pay any serious attention to the Macedonian so long as he left their own actual coasts alone. They, therefore, contented themselves by constantly sending embassies requesting him to desist. under threat of serious punishment, at which embassies Philip merely snapped his fingers. Thus, despite the prayers of Elissa to either build ships or else march by land to Italy, as her father had done from Spain before him, the war upon which Philip had launched, in his ardour to win over Hannibal's daughter, proved of no use to Hannibal himself whatever. Nevertheless it continued for years, and the name of Philip was so dreaded on land that so long as the Macedonian was unable to effect any junction with Hannibal, the Romans were quite contented to leave him alone, other than, as already mentioned, by sending threatening embassies.

But Elissa's discontent grew continually more and more, for she ever regretted bitterly having given over her fate into this man's hands. In one of these wars, fearing to leave Elissa behind in case she might perchance either leave his court in his absence or be captured by some rival monarch, Philip took her with him, and Cleandra with her. It was an expedition upon which he had embarked against the city of Abydos, upon the Hellespont. The city was obstinately defended, and while King Attalus and all the Rhodians sailed through the Ægean Sea to the assistance of Tenedos, the Romans sent the youngest of their ambassadors, one Marcus Æmilius, to Abydos itself to warn Philip to desist.

Now this Marcus Æmilius had been, as quite a lad, present with Scipio at the court of Syphax at the time of Elissa's presence there, and she knew him well. But when she saw him appear before Philip she made no sign of ever having seen the man before, for he was now celebrated as the handsomest man of his time; and having already quite enough to suffer from the tyranny of Philip, she determined to give the Macedonian king no opportunity of making her life more unbearable than usual by becoming jealous also.

Æmilius having, however, been received honourably and appointed certain tents in the king's encampments before Abydos, Cleandra easily obtained access to him before he had had more than the most formal interview with Philip, one merely, indeed, to present his credentials, upon which occasion Elissa had seen him, and longed to speak to him for the sake of old times.

Cleandra soon told Æmilius that her royal Mistress Elissa sent him warm and friendly greetings, and inquired kindly for himself and for Scipio, his former chief.

Marcus in return sent greetings to Elissa, and informed her that not only had he recent tidings of Scipio, but had also a letter from him to deliver to herself; further, that he awaited the result of his embassy to the king to see whether he should deliver the letter in person or send it to her by the hand of Cleandra, for he would like if possible to make its delivery an opportunity of approaching her mistress. But Cleandra he retained a long time with him, for she was still young and beautiful, and had, moreover, travelled greatly. The young Roman was not enjoying life at all in his present capacity, among a people with whom he could only talk by means of an interpreter, and was delighted to meet a handsome young woman with whom he could converse freely in the Latin tongue. Eventually Cleandra left him, promising to see him again after he had had audience of the king.

CHAPTER IV.

A LETTER FROM SCIPIO.

The king received Æmilius in audience on the following morning in the presence of Elissa and all his courtiers, and from the beginning it was evident that the interview would be a stormy one. For the young ambassador commenced by informing Philip that the Senate ordered him not to wage war with any Greek state, nor to interfere in the dominions of Ptolemy, and to submit the injuries that he had inflicted upon Attalus and the Rhodians to arbitration, saying that if he obeyed these orders they would grant him peace, otherwise he must take the consequences of the enmity of Rome. Upon Philip endeavouring to show that the fault was all on the other side, and that the Rhodians had been the first to lay hands on him, Marcus interrupted the king insolently:

"But what," he said, "of the Athenians? And what of the people of Abydos at this minute? Did any one of them also lay hands on thee first?"

Philip, at a loss for a reply, said:

"I pardon the offensive haughtiness of thy manners for three reasons; first, because thou art a young man and inexperienced in affairs; secondly, because thou art the handsomest man of thy time; and thirdly, because thou art a Roman. But if the Romans choose to behave badly to me I shall defend myself as courageously as I can, calling upon the gods to defend my cause."

With these words the audience was broken up. It was now evident from the temper of the king that in all probability no opportunity would occur for Marcus to meet Elissa in friendly converse. But under pretence of seeking a further audience later on, Æmilius remained until the fall of Abydos, which took place after some most desperate hand-to-hand fighting.

Meanwhile, Cleandra visited him again on various occasions, and eventually obtained from him Scipio's letter, which she herself delivered to Elissa, although Marcus had been most anxious to see Elissa and deliver it in person.

So Abydos fell! and its fall was accompanied by the most terrible scenes that it is possible to imagine. But the horrors that took place were not owing to the cruelty of Philip, but rather to the insensate folly of the inhabitants of Abydos themselves, who had determined to slay all their wives and children rather than that they should fall into the hands of the enemy. They had intended also to destroy at one blow the whole of their gold and silver and valuable property; but Philip found it all ready to his hand, having been collected in two ships, which they had not had time to put out to sea and sink as intended. Thus he captured it all, an immense booty.

When Philip entered the town the people of the city commenced to slay themselves and each other. When he saw the numbers and fury of those who were stabbing, burning, hanging, throwing themselves and others into wells, or precipitating themselves from house-tops with their children and their wives, Philip was overpowered with surprise and horror, as was Elissa. She, indeed, with tears in her eyes, conjured him, by all the gods, to put a stop to these terrible proceedings if it were possible, for the city was filled with the shrieks of the dying women and children. Thereupon Philip published a proclamation announcing "that he gave three days' grace to all those who wished to hang or stab themselves." Thus, if they so willed, they had plenty of time to leave the city with their women, and neither become prisoners of war themselves nor run the risks of their wives and daughters being taken into slavery by the conqueror. But with the exception of a quantity of the more beautiful girls, whom Philip had saved upon first entering the city, the inhabitants of Abydos continued to For they conslaughter themselves wholesale by families. sidered themselves as traitors to those who had already died for their country should they survive them.

Philip, seeing that they took no notice of his proclamation,

allowed them to go their own way to destruction. He himself celebrated the conquest of the town in his usual manner, by indulging openly with his courtiers in scenes of unbridled drunkenness and debauchery.

These he now indulged in the more openly, in order that he might annoy the unhappy Elissa and humiliate her before others, in which design he certainly succeeded.

For seeing herself made of so little account before the eyes of all, Elissa, disgusted and disgraced, determined to put an end to her miserable existence once and for all.

But Cleandra, as upon a previous occasion, urged her yet to live for her country's cause. And this was upon the very night on which Cleandra obtained from Æmilius Scipio's letter, which came as balm to soothe her. It was written in Greek, and was as follows:—

"From Publius Cornelius, son of Publius Cornelius Scipio, to Elissa, daughter of Hannibal.

"In the name of the great god Jupiter, lord of the universe, greeting! The years have passed away one by one with rapidity, and great and sudden have been the changes upon the face of the world. But one thing hath neither passed away with time nor altered with change. As Scipio did love thee when thou didst even weep upon his shoulder upon bidding him farewell in New Carthage, so doth he now love thee upon sending thee these lines of greeting from Rome. And greatly doth he long to have tidings of thee by thine own hand, and still more to again behold thy beautiful and beloved features.

"Elissa, I, Scipio, have been fighting all these years in Iberia, and have driven out thine uncle Hasdrubal in the north, who marched across the Alps into Italy, and fell bravely fighting at the battle of the Metaurus. I have likewise driven out thine uncle Mago in the south, who, after retiring for a space to the Balearic Islands, hath now seized upon the city and province of Genoa in Northern Italy. Hasdrubal, the son

of Gisco, have I also met in various bloody encounters, in which the gods were ever propitious to me and to the arms of Rome. Thus all Iberia hath fallen into my hands, and I am now recalled to Rome. For owing to the continued presence of thy father and his armies, after so many years, even yet continuing the struggle with occasional successes in the south of Italy, and on account of the great insult that he put upon the city of Rome herself, in riding up to her walls and throwing his javeline over the very city gates, the Romans are now determined to take by my hand means to avenge these insults by carrying the war beyond our coasts upon African soil. And since there is no secret made of this determination. I do write unto thee upon the subject for thine own welfare. For, my beloved, even as I have loved thee, and offered up my prayers and sacrifices unto the gods for thy sake during all these my vicissitudes by war, so do I still consider thee and love thee with a single-minded devotion that nought save death may change.

"Therefore, no thought of any possible military glory which may accrue unto myself can weigh in the balance where thy happiness and welfare are concerned, especially since I see that through thee any further bloodshed may now be avoided. For thy country of Carthage may be even yet saved from invasion if thou wilt but hearken unto my words and come to me now, when I will espouse thee, and peace will be made between Rome and Hannibal. For both sides are utterly weary of this endless war, and thy father Hannibal, after having lost Capua, which was retaken by our arms despite his repeated attempts to relieve it, after having lost Tarentum, which is also retaken by Rome, after having lost nearly all his Numidian cavalry at the town of Salapia, including, it is said, thine old lover Maharbal, is now reduced to the position of a wolf guarding the mountain passes of Bruttium and the few Greek cities on the Bruttian promontory beyond. 'Tis true that, like the bold wolf that he is, he doth occasionally sally forth from his corner of Italy, and ever with certain success; and hath even recently, in one of these expeditions, slain the mighty Marcus Marcellus

himself, the sword of Rome, the conqueror of Syracuse, for whose memory thou canst bear no great love. For I did hear how, after thine escape with Cleandra, by the treachery of the flag-captain, from Caius Lælius's ship-which escape did greatly chagrin both Caius, on account of Cleandra, and myself -fearing for thy life in Syracuse—thou didst bravely fight against Marcellus throughout the whole siege, av. even until the fall of the city. And since then, although having learned with greatest joy of thine escape from death in the final massacre of Syracuse. I have become aware, with deep regret, of thy residence at the court of Philip of Macedon, I would have thee at once fly in the ship with Marcus Æmilius. the bearer of this letter, whom thou didst meet with me in Numidia. For it is not possible but that the doings of the daughter of Hannibal must be known everywhere, especially when that daughter is Elissa, whose beauty and feats are so celebrated. Hence I, in common with all the Romans, have perfectly understood that it is thou thyself Elissa who hast been the cause of the war between Philip of Macedon and Rome. For knowing thy devotion to thy country, it is not difficult for me to clearly understand with what object thou hast consented to live with the base Macedonian wretch, whom, so I have recently heard by spies, maketh thee by no means happy. for one reason do I ardently desire the continuation of that war of thy making with Philip, and that is that the gods may spare me to drive my sword up to the hilt in the throat of the scoundrel king. For hath not he, by nought save guile and wickedness, gained possession of that one dear flower of womanhood which I would have plucked and worn myself; and hath not he again, after having himself ravished the flower from its stem, now left its petals in all their sweetness to wither and perish with neglect? Therefore, accursed be he-ay, doubly accursed—by all the gods!

"Now Elissa, my beloved, after deep communing with the mighty Olympian gods, who have even appeared unto me in dreams, they have clearly pointed out to me both my duty to my country and to the woman whom I love, and also the duty to

her country, to herself, and even to me, Scipio, of that woman, she being Elissa, the daughter of the great Hannibal, son of Hamilcar Barca. Thus the gods themselves, by whom, as thou knewest in times past, I am beloved, and who appear unto me still, even as did Neptune, god of the sea, before the fall of the New Town, have clearly directed thy course for thee for the sake of thine own country's welfare. Since, moreover, there is now no longer the shadow of the Numidian Maharbal between us, do I beseech thee to fly from the court of this dissolute Philip, and come to Rome with Marcus Æmilius; and then I pledge thee my troth that, saying never a word of reproach concerning the said Philip, I will make thee my loved and honoured wife. And there shall thus, by thee, be peace again between Carthage and Rome, after so many years of warfare and of misery. Now, farewell, Elissa. I prithee salute the lady Cleandra if she be still with thee; Caius Lælius likewise sendeth her salutations. As for thyself, I commend thee to the blessing of the gods.

"(Sealed) Scipio."

CHAPTER V.

A SCENE OF HORROR.

IT was night, a calm summer night, when Elissa, after reading Scipio's letter, remained alone within a gorgeous pavilion in a camp established upon the shores of the Hellespont, the letter lying listlessly upon her lap. With head thrown back upon the cushions of her divan, the light of a single cresset lamp, formed of gold in a chaste design, but barely illumined her features, for she was withdrawn, while thus leaning back, from the radius of its not too powerful glow. The doors of the tent being open, Elissa could see the radiant moonbeams without dancing upon the waters of the Hellespont, and lighting up at the same time the tideless sea and the mountains upon the further shore.

The Carthaginian maiden rose, and stepping without the tent gazed wistfully across the straits. How peaceful would have been the scene had Mother Nature alone been the all-pervading genius of the surroundings.

But, alas! there were other and more horrid sights and sounds, making the night, otherwise so beautiful, most terrible in all its aspects.

On every side could be seen flaming houses; in all directions could be seen the flying forms of screaming women and children, as their fathers, husbands, or lovers, carrying out the fearful compact made among themselves, ruthlessly pursued those nearest and dearest to them to put them to a cruel death.

At hand here and there could be seen, even close to the tents of the royal encampment, shapeless, huddled-up forms lying on the ground. Some of these, lighted up by the rays of the brilliant moon, or glittering in the flickering light of the fires, betokened that they were the bodies of dead warriors;

others, from their white, disordered, and oft-times bloodstained raiment, were clearly the corpses of some of the unhappy female victims. Some, indeed, of the prostate women, as appeared by their writhings and spasmodic struggles, were not even yet dead, but no one took the trouble to put them out of their misery, for the groups of Macedonian guards who were here and there lying about the open space, were evidently all under the influence of numerous libations, and were in a drunken sleep, utterly careless of their surroundings. Meanwhile, while the fires around ever crackled and roared, and the heavy smoke drifted away landward before a faint sea breeze, louder and more discordant sounds disturbed the midnight air.

From an adjacent and brilliantly lighted pavilion there arose, all combined, noisy shouts, uproarious laughter, and the screams of women.

Walking unmolested across the open space which separated her pavilion from that of the king, and carefully avoiding stepping upon any of the corpses as she went, Elissa looked within. The sight that she saw filled her with loathing and disgust. For Philip and his courtiers, lolling round a huge table, covered with gold and silver wine-cups, were making merry of the misery of many beautiful young women, their recent captives, whose tear-stained faces and disordered dress told only too plainly the brutality to which they were exposed.

The king himself was a ring-leader at the horrid game which they were playing with the struggling young women. Holding forcibly a damsel upon each knee, he was, with hilarious laughter, delighting at their unavailing struggles, while some of his sycophants poured by force between their unwilling lips, cup after cup of the rich red wine. Thus were they making drunk, in spite of themselves, the miserable maidens, many of whom had probably never even tasted wine before. Some of the young girls had already thus been reduced to a state of intoxication, and were reeling about the spacious apartment, or lying helplessly, grotesquely weeping, on the floor. The onlooking Macedonian nobles meanwhile

nouted with laughter. It was a terrible sight! Not only did fill her with terror at what might perchance befall herself, but no horror and anger that filled Elissa's mind drove her to an wful resolve. Seizing a firebrand from a deserted watchere, she advanced once more stealthily towards the windward de of the huge tent, intending to burn alive this satyr of a king and all his horrid crew. But, just in time, she remembered nat she would have to burn as well all the wretched young omen.

Therefore, although she rightly considered that a speedy eath would be far better for them than a life under such conitions, she could not find it in her heart to let the poor elpless victims die so painfully. With a groan she threw the rebrand back into the fire, and, invoking all the curses of the ods upon the head of Philip, she retired once more to her ent. Here, trying to shut her ears to the roaring of the fires, ie screaming of the dying women and children, the brutal routings of the drunken nobles, and the miserable lamentaons of the insulted maidens, she once more read through cipio's letter.

She made up her mind at once that Scipio was right, that her uty to her country was, whatever it might have been in the past. ow undoubtedly to proceed to Rome, and, by espousing Scipio, hose devotion touched her heart deeply, to conclude a peace, possible, between Rome and Carthage. Two reasons strongly apelled her. One was that the death of her once so deeplyeloved Maharbal had now removed a great barrier; the other, 1at she believed firmly, with many others, that Scipio was ideed, as he pretended, a man specially favoured by the gods. ad that they held personal communings with him, and to her ind these divine inspirations accounted for all his successes. one thing, at all events, Elissa was certain, that she wished or no more war. For, if her efforts to embroil Philip in the ruggle between Carthage and Rome had only resulted in such errible scenes as she had been witnessing during the last few ays, she felt convinced that such war must be distasteful to ne gods themselves. Therefore she determined to use all her endeavours now to bring about a lasting peace, for that was, since the gods themselves had declared it, clearly at this juncture her duty to her country, and to the world at large.

Elissa summoned Cleandra, who was even more terrified than herself at the awful scenes around, and with reason, for upon returning from the tent of Marcus Æmilius only an hour previously, she had had a very narrow escape of her life from some of the citizens of Abydos. They had been upon the point of slaying her by mistake for one of their own women, when fortunately some Macedonians of the royal guard, to whom she was known, had come to her assistance, and had slain her aggressors. But now the guards were all drunk, and the two women knew that if they were to escape they must reach alone the camp of the Roman embassy, which, being on the shore close to the Roman ships, was carefully entrenched and properly guarded by the ambassador's own escort.

Cleandra, who had, when in the tent of Æmilius, had her wits about her as usual, had not been wasting her time. She knew all about the drift of the contents of Scipio's letter, and had even heard of the death of Maharbal before Elissa gave her the tidings, but she had preferred to keep her own counsel until her mistress and friend should learn them for herself from the letter.

Not waiting for Elissa to make up her mind to fly, Cleandra had laid her schemes, anticipating Elissa's consent. She had accordingly arranged with Marcus Æmilius to have all his men ready on board ship, and everything prepared for instant sailing, promising him to return with Hannibal's daughter, if possible, before dawn.

In the event of her not being able to prevail upon Elissa to fly, Cleandra had begged the gallant young Roman to leave Abydos without her, for she was resolved herself to share Elissa's fortunes for weal or woe in the future as in the past. Nor could the prayers of Marcus, who was most loath to leave her, that she should herself fly with him, move Cleandra in the least; for, although ever fickle with men, she was faithful beyond the fidelity of women where Hannibal's daughter was concerned.

reely staying to console Elissa upon the death of Maharhich she evidently felt deeply, Cleandra set about collecttheir jewellery and money, and concealing it about her 1. As for Elissa, she donned instantly her war-gear, and I herself with a sheath, darts, and a sword, for in this garb id no fear of not being able to pass in safety through any parties of the Macedonian guards as might not be too cated to recognise her.

ding Cleandra cover herself with a dark cloak and to her, she, after extinguishing the light, stepped forth from nt, the entrance to which she closed. Then passing in f the king's pavilion, where the noise was not now quite essive, they took their way to the Roman entrenchments. It had passed the royal tent in safety, and, while threading way with caution, were nearly out of ear-shot of the royal ipment, when suddenly they came, standing outside their ents, upon two of the most debauched nobles of a deed court, Alexander, son of Phidias, and Xenacreon, son emistocles. Xenacreon had for long ardently pursued dra, and, despite her cloak, he recognised her in a moment. ling forward he seized her, exclaiming:

ha, my lady Cleandra! whither away thus in disguise like in the night? For sure thou seekest a lover; well, here ill ready to thy hand, take me!" and he embraced her

andra did not seek to struggle at first, but only to tem-She answered civilly, for she did not wish the sound discussion to reach the king in his tent.

pray thee release me, my good Xenacreon, and I will thee some other time. Just now I may not stay; I am ed on important business with the lady Elissa."

ith Elissa, the king's courtesan, now out of favour!" exd Xenacreon loudly. "Well, what is good for one is or another. I will not, so that I get thee, grudge her to ider here, who long hath admired her; so take her, ider, I give her unto thee! But come thou with me now, Cleandra, no time is like the present." And while he sought to drag her within his tent, Alexander sprang forward swiftly and attempted likewise to seize upon Elissa herself.

But she was far too quick for him, and leapt nimbly on one side, discharging, as she did so, a dart which transfixed him through and through. He fell groaning to the ground, writhing in agony.

"Now for thy turn, Xenacreon!" cried Elissa. "Take thou this for thy dastardly insult to 'the king's courtesan, now out of favour.'"

And she plunged her sword deep into his body below the upraised arms with which he held Cleandra. Snatching Cleandra from his grasp before there was time even for her to be stained with his blood, Elissa started running, dragging Cleandra after her, for she perceived that the king himself had rushed out of his tent, followed by such of his officers as could stand.

But, although raising hoarse, drunken cries, they ran in the direction of the women, they could not see them, or, indeed, their own way, for on coming out into the darkness from the brilliant light they were blinded, and caught their feet in the numerous tent ropes, and fell sprawling in all directions. Some of them even got so far as the prostrate bodies of Alexander and Xenacreon, over whose still breathing forms they fell heavily, while cursing loudly. But Cleandra and Elissa easily escaped, and soon reached the Roman entrenchments in safety, where Marcus Æmilius was waiting in person to receive them.

Welcoming them heartily, he quickly took them off to his ship. Then withdrawing his guard, but leaving his camp standing so as to deceive the Macedonians in the early morning, he set sail at once with his three vessels, and soon they felt the cool breezes of the Ægean Sea blowing in their faces. Long before dawn they were well out of sight of land, and steering a course for Tarentum on the Iapygian promontory.

PART VI.

CHAPTER I.

A SPELL OF PEACE.

FOR the first time for years Elissa was able to enjoy a space of peace of mind and body. Lying back upon her cushions, beneath the awnings on the deck of the stately ambassadorial quinquereme, she was at length at rest. Lulled rather than disturbed by the swishing sound of the five banks of oars moving in absolute unison, she gazed out languidly at the successive red-cliffed and grass-clad islands of Greece and felt happy. For now all suspense was over, she had resolved upon her future course: and, as Polybius has said, there is naught so terrible as suspense. Let the circumstances of life be good or bad, while they are hanging in the balance there is ever anxiety, agitation, impatience, to distress the mind. they be decided one way or another the soul is relieved; if decided for evil, then the worst is known already, if for good, the heart will cease from painfully throbbing in anxious agitation, and be at rest.

Thus, then, was it with Elissa, as, for want of wind, propelled merely by the oars, the ship glided steadily onward over the sunny summer seas. Now she had no longer any anxiety as to the port for which her life's bark was steering. She had made up her mind at length to marry Scipio, and was clearly satisfied that her ship of life was having its course shaped by the great gods who ruled her destiny, and that therefore that course must be right, and her own determination a righteous one.

So, even while thinking of Maharbal with a softened regret 351

—for he was scarcely more to her than a dream of years long gone by—she allowed herself the almost unknown luxury of being happy. And the happiness came, not from any sense of satisfaction at a realised ambition, nor from the feeling of joy that is experienced in the attainment of a long-desired love, but simply from the relief obtained after long battlings in stormy waters. Now the guest and not the prisoner of Rome, she day after day enjoyed her calm repose, and, while fervently thanking the gods for her relief from the degrading atmosphere of Philip's court, did not weary her mind with anxious forebodings or misgivings for the future. She thought, it is true, of Scipio, and thought of him frequently, but it was more in admiration of his nobility of soul than with the ardent passion of a lover.

That passion, indeed, he had inspired years ago, but it had been in spite of herself, and she had known how to do her duty to her absent lover in repressing it. Now she felt that she loved him indeed, and deeply, but the affection which she felt in her inmost womanhood was, she was aware, more like that very love of a sister which she had formerly professed for him, than that more thrilling love of mutual passion which she knew they had both experienced in bygone days.

The moderated nature of her sensations, however, did not trouble her; on the contrary, their very moderation was a part of the relief of mind which she now experienced. She loved Scipio in a pure way, and she longed to see him and to tell him her deep and great admiration for the grandeur of his soul; the other feeling might come back again later, on meeting again. If so, she would welcome its return gladly, for she felt that Scipio deserved something more at her hands than mere sisterly love; but in the meantime it suited her wearied brain to think about him, as of all other things, tranquilly. For her past had in very sooth been stormy enough under all its aspects, from its very commencement as a child with her father in scenes of war; as a maiden, in her mad and unreasoning passion for Maharbal and the grief of separation from him; then later during the bloody and terrible sieges of New Carthage and Syra-

cuse; and last, but by no means least, the terrible humiliation endured in the court of the Macedonian king.

Elissa was now no longer a girl, and, as she closed her eyes and thought dreamily of all her past, she realised that for nothing on earth would she live over again the terrible years that had rolled over her head since she had changed from an inexperienced maiden to an experienced woman, whose life was far too highly filled with incident for anything approaching to real happiness to find a home within her breast. But she was happy now at length for a season, after all her warrings and wanderings, and, realising this fact, she wished that the peaceful voyage might never come to an end.

Cleandra, in the meantime, was adapting herself to circumstances as usual, and was happy too. For, forgetting her first husband, Imlico the Carthaginian noble, whom she had taken as a mere means to an end—to escape from slavery to wit; forgetting also her second husband, the Roman flag-captain Ascanius, whom she had taken for a similar reason, she had now for the first time in her life fallen deeply and ardently in love. And this time her love was, she well knew, as ardently and truly returned by Marcus Æmilius, the youngest of the Roman ambassadors, whom King Philip had rightly designated as the handsomest man of his time.

Thus Cleandra looked forward to the time when Elissa should be united to Scipio with pleasant anticipations of herself, upon the same occasion, becoming once more a bride, and this time a bride entirely from choice, not from necessity. Meanwhile, as there was a band of musicians on board the young ambassador's ship, consisting of minstrels and dancing girls, the evenings passed merrily with song and dance. Thus the time sped gaily enough.

The ships, after passing through the Grecian islands, hit off the southernmost coast of the Peloponnesus but did not touch anywhere. But once the western side of the lowermost parts of Greece had been gained, a strong western breeze set in, on account of which the land was not only closely hugged, but frequent stoppages were made at various ports or inlets. For the inhabitants of the western coast were, if not exactly friendly to Rome, afraid of Rome, and, above all, the name of Philip was abhorred in those parts. Therefore, frequent landings were made in convenient creeks and inlets, and, to pass the time, when the wind was too strong without, the seine nets would be got out, and a morning or afternoon employed innocently in fishing beneath the shadow of a headland in some land-locked bay.

It was delightful to Elissa now, her armour all laid aside, clad in modest raiment given to her by the minstrel girls on board, to join in these fishing parties. She loved also to watch the sea-gulls grouped on the rocks, or the nimble-winged flyingfishes springing like a covey of partridges from the foam. What, in her present softened mood, when all relating to war and death was distasteful, grieved her, however, was that even to capture the innocent fishes meant death to some of the creatures created by the gods, while she soon learned that when the flying-fishes sprang into the air, it was only because a group of porpoises was pursuing them. Moreover, she observed that, especially when near the coast, the ospreys or fish-eagles, swooping down from their eyries, would often seize them in their talons. Thus, if they escaped by taking flight from one danger in the sea, they, nevertheless, succumbed to another danger in the air. And whenever Elissa allowed herself to think at all, a thing that she, with all her will, did her utmost to avoid, she vaguely hoped that her fate might not be that of a flying-fish springing from one danger, that it knew of close at hand in the water, to another, that it knew not of, in the air.

But she realised, from thus observing the birds and the fishes, that, even in the calmest scenes of nature, the eternal laws of death and destruction are ever present and in force; that there is nought that liveth but must die, and die, more frequently than not, by a cruel death. All this only strengthened all the more her serious resolve to do all within her power to save unhappy humanity from further suffering, and for the future to work in the interests of peace alone.

Having made up her mind firmly on this point, she de-

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termined further that never again would she raise her own hand in warfare, that never would she wear armour more.

Calling Cleandra, she bade her bring to her, where she was reclining under a silken canopy on the poop, the light cuirass and helmet incrusted with gold that had protected her in many a fight, the trusty sword with which she had struck in the wars with Mago, in the defence of the New Town and in the streets of Syracuse, many a blow on behalf of Carthage. She bade Cleandra bring also to her the sheath of darts, whence she had drawn years before the weapon which had slain Cnœus Scipio, and quite recently that which had procured her escape from Alexander, son of Phidias, by causing his death.

Lastly, she bade Cleandra bring her beautiful shield of polished steel, inlaid with gold, bearing on its centre a golden representation of the horse of Carthage. When Cleandra had placed all these weapons and arms by Elissa's side on the deck, she asked, with some curiosity:

"What wilt thou do with thine armour to-day, Elissa? Here in this land-locked bay there is nought for thee to fight, unless it be with yonder monstrous shark, whose triangular back fin appeareth moving lazily above the surface of the pellucid waters. Ugh! I hate sharks! and this one hath followed us for days. Canst thou not fancy his horrid teeth meeting through thy flesh?"

And, clasping her hands to her bosom, Cleandra shuddered. "Ay, what would the lady Elissa do with her arms here upon my ship?" asked courteously Marcus Æmilius, who had followed Cleandra. "Hath she cause of offence against any person that she need defend herself while being my guest? If so, by the Olympian Jove, the offender shall suffer for it."

"Nay, nay, good Marcus!" answered Elissa, laughing at the young man's serious looks, "I need not mine armour for any defensive purposes, but merely as solid food wherewith to feed yonder hungry shark. For henceforth I will be a woman only, and mine only defence shall be my virtue; or, rather," she continued, smiling bitterly, "so much of it as King Philip hath left

me. I have no longer need for sword or shield, neither helmet nor cuirass can make me what I was; no arms, alas! can give me back the self-respect that was mine before I fell into the clutches of Philip of Macedon; thus I will no more employ them to slaughter hapless beings who may already, perchance, have suffered as deeply as I have myself."

She paused, and furtively wiped away a tear, for she was, indeed, all woman now. Stooping, she seized upon her helmet, rose, and cast it overboard.

Like a streak of light did the shark, with gleaming side, dash through the water. Turning belly upwards, he seized the helmet, displaying two triple rows of teeth just below them as they stood by the bulwarks.

Cleandra screamed at the sight of the horrid monster so close to her, and seized Marcus tightly by the arm.

"Dost thou see the brute?" quoth Elissa; "he eateth, with the digestion of an ostrich, everything, no matter of what description, that falls overboard; I have watched him for days. He would, indeed, make but one bite of thy sweet rounded form, my dear Cleandra, so grasp thy Marcus firmly.

"But now," she continued, "he shall have that I never yet yielded to living man—and much good may it do him."

So saying, she cast her bared sword into the water. The savage brute dashed at it as before, and caught the glittering weapon in its gigantic maw.

In striving to close its mouth, however, the point entered deeply into the upper jaw, while the hilt remained against the lower one. Thus, the huge beast could not close its horrid teeth, but remained lashing furiously with its tail the waters, which were soon tinged with blood. Meanwhile, while watching the struggles of the gigantic shark, Elissa threw over in turn her cuirass and her sheath of darts.

There now remained nought but her shield. Elissa picked this up, intending that it should follow all the rest. But her hands were unequal to the deed. As she gazed down upon the golden horse in its centre, the salt tears fell upon the polished but dinted steel, wherein she seemed to see as in a

mirror all her warlike past, all those deeds of arms that she was renouncing now for ever.

"Oh, I cannot do it!" she sobbed. "I cannot cast away my shield, my last defence, so oft my trusty friend."

Gently, the loving Cleandra wound an arm round the beautiful young woman and soothed her, while Marcus Æmilius, embarrassed beyond measure, and, as a warrior, grieved also at the scene he had been witnessing, in seeing these arms cast away, turned to the side of the ship to watch the still struggling tiger of the deep, who, now that he was in adversity, was being attacked by several others of his own kind. For some small ground sharks, that had not hitherto shown themselves, suddenly appeared from the bottom of the bay, and were savagely tearing away at his defenceless sides, biting out huge pieces.

Elissa, recovering herself, pointed out what was taking place to Cleandra.

"How like humanity! where the little are ever ready to take advantage of the misfortunes of the great. And how like a warrior deprived of sword and shield, ay, even like myself, is that now defenceless monster. But although in future I will be woman, not warrior, I will not after all cast away that emblem of a warrior's defence, for which a woman hath no need."

She drew herself up proudly, and approached the Roman.

"Marcus Æmilius, since thou art my defence at this moment, and since, by all the gods! I do most sincerely trust in thine honour, I will even confer upon thee that which hath been the safeguard of Hannibal's daughter from Roman weapons in many a bloody field. For no need have I, now nought but a mere woman, for a shield, being under the care of an honourable man. Therefore take thou my buckler, and keep it, for Elissa's sake."

The handsome young ambassador was a most courtly knight. He threw himself upon one knee to receive the tendered gift. While he received the shield with one hand he raised the other to heaven in an invocation.

"May the great god Jupiter destroy me with his thunder-

bolts, if ever I should part from this most sacred shield, or should I ever harm a hair of the head of the most gracious and lovely lady who hath bestowed it upon me."

He kissed Elissa's hand, then rising and holding the shield with all honour, as though it were an offering consecrated to the gods, Marcus Æmilius bore it with him to his cabin.

Meanwhile, the little sharks were still tearing the big shark to pieces, and, as the monster writhed about in its agony, the rays of the sun were frequently brilliantly reflected from Elissa's sword blade fixed upright in the midst of its horrible fangs. But even as Æmilius disappeared from view, bearing her shield, so with a last convulsive struggle did the monster sink, followed by its tormentors.

Elissa accepted this as a good omen, a sign that her own troubles were buried for ever with her sword at the bottom of the sea. And she felt happier and altogether more womanly now that she had thus divested herself of her arms and armour.

The voyage was a long one, owing to the adverse breezes, which made the crossing of the southern part of the Adriatic impossible for a time; but at length, the wind changing, the ships were able to issue from the Grecian land-locked harbour, where they were lying, and pass swiftly across to the entrance of the Tarentine Gulf, situated between the Iapygian and Bruttian promontories, which form, as it were, respectively the heel and the toe of the south of Italy.

As the ships sailed in, the day being remarkably clear, Æmilius pointed out to Elissa and Cleandra something white glistening on the hill-tops to the far west across the gulf. This, he informed them, was the celebrated temple of Juno Lacinia, which was held most sacred by all, and especially by seamen, as it formed a landmark for them to steer by. What neither Æmilius nor Elissa knew, however, was that Hannibal her father was at that very time encamped with his forces in the sacred groves and parks surrounding the temple. For he had made of that spot, known as the Lacinian Promontory, his head-quarters.

Although some Carthaginian vessels were sighted in the distance, and Æmilius had some anxiety in consequence, he managed to elude them, and to arrive with his three ships safely within the harbour of Tarentum. Before entering the harbour, a great part of the town had been passed, and Elissa noticed that it had a miserable and deserted look. This was not surprising, for, upon its recent delivery by treachery to the Romans, thirty thousand of its Greek inhabitants had been sold into slavery, while all its Bruttian inhabitants had been massacred. Moreover, all the famous statues and works of art in the city had been taken away to Rome.

CHAPTER II.

ELISSA WRITES TO SCIPIO.

When the three Roman warships were safe within the shelter of the harbour, the entrance to which was completely dominated by the citadel, now full of Roman soldiers, the first thing that was pointed out to Elissa was the place where her father Hannibal had, by night, some years previously, withdrawn the Tarentine fleet from the waters and conveyed the whole of the ships on wheels and rollers across the isthmus into the open seas without. At the same time Æmilius dwelt with pride upon the fact that, although Hannibal had entered the town by the treachery of two of its inhabitants to Rome, and eventually lost it again by the treachery of its commander to Carthage, yet had her father never been able to capture the citadel, notwithstanding his several years' occupation of the city.

The arrival of the young ambassador and his squadron created no slight stir in the place, and the three quinquiremes had no sooner cast anchor than the Roman governor of the town, one Caius Tacitus, lost no time in coming off in his State barge to visit the envoy, and to learn the latest tidings from the court of Philip.

When the governor found that Elissa was on board, as the friend, not the prisoner of Marcus Æmilius, his surprise knew no bounds. Nor was his surprise modified when he learned that Hannibal's daughter was on her way to Rome to marry Scipio. Withholding any news of Italian matters until later, Caius invited Marcus and his guests to come ashore without delay, when he entertained them right royally to a banquet in the citadel.

It was during this banquet that Elissa became aware of two

circumstances. The first was that her father was encamped with his forces somewhere in the Bruttian Peninsula, at some point probably within a hundred Roman miles of where she then was; the second that, despite his youth, Scipio had been elected consul for the year, and had been recently despatched into Sicily. Thither he had been sent with two Roman legions as a nucleus, and was now busy raising a large army from various sources and building a fleet with which to cross over the sea to Carthaginian soil.

This information gave Elissa much cause for reflection; for it was, indeed, thoroughly calculated to arouse all kinds of conflicting feelings in her mind.

The calm which had so recently existed in her breast was already disturbed, and once again all was riot and chaos within. For her duty now scarcely seemed so clear to her as it had been, when all that was required of her was to go straight to Rome and join Scipio, and when she had had no idea of her own father's likely proximity. She wondered now if it were not rather her duty to endeavour by some means or other to join her father.

That night, after her return to the ship, she pondered long on the subject, nor would she hold any converse with Cleandra. who was anxious to know how Elissa had taken the news. Her she sent to talk with Æmilius, while keeping apart herself in a separate part of the ship. And thinking of her father's many exploits, by one alone of which this very city of Tarentum was to be for ever celebrated, she remained gazing into the night, and most ardently did Elissa offer up her prayers to the great god Melcareth that he would guide her in this juncture. She was not weighing in her mind the possibility of carrying out any plan of escape to her father's camp, but rather that which would be right and just for her to do in the sight of heaven. At length light came to her brain and her course Evidently she was bound more than ever now seemed clear. to fall in with Scipio's wishes; bound in honour to him, for was she not now by his means safely removed from the clutches of the detested Philip? and, more than ever, for the

very sake of Carthage, for, while the Phoenician power was diminishing to a vanishing point all over the world, the power of Rome was ever increasing by leaps and bounds.

Further, since Scipio had, in addition to all the honours he had won, now been appointed consul, he would be in a far better position to make himself heard before the Senate in a matter of peace and war. Moreover, the invasion of Carthage clearly depended in a great measure upon him alone, since he had only been provided with two legions to start with, which legions consisted merely of the runaways from the battle of Cannæ, who had been kept for punishment in Sicily ever since. Thus, upon the celerity and ability which, acting entirely upon his own resources, he might display in getting an army together and likewise a fleet, would entirely depend the possibility of a descent upon Libyan or Numidian soil. Should she therefore marry him, that invasion would not take place.

Having argued these points out in her own mind, Elissa put entirely on one side any hopes that she might have for the moment entertained of once more seeing her father, and determined to carry out the line of action she had marked out for herself upon the night of leaving the burning city of Abydos. Then seeking her couch, she slept peacefully.

Upon the following morn Marcus Æmilius informed her that his three ships were to remain in Tarentum for a short time to re-fit and re-provision, and further, until he himself could obtain direct instructions from Rome as to his own movements. He added that he was sending, in addition to messengers by land to Rome, a direct report of all that had taken place to Scipio himself. This report would leave that same night by a swift and celebrated blockade-runner, a quadrireme that had been captured from the Carthaginians during the siege of Systeuse. This quadrireme he intended to send first of all to Systeuse, and, if Scipio were not there, then on to Libybeum, and Panormus. He would be surely found in the vicinity of one of the three ports, and in all probability at Syracuse, the most adjacent of the three.

Upon hearing this, while regretting the delay which she feared might perchance prove fatal, or result in herself being sent, not to Scipio, but to Rome, Elissa determined upon writing to the consul. But first she demanded urgently of Æmilius to send her to Scipio upon the blockade-runner. This was, however, a responsibility which the young envoy felt he could not bring upon himself to incur; for was she not, he urged, entrusted to his safeguard and keeping, with all honour and comfort, and that with a squadron for her protection? But should he place her upon the blockade-runner, which was manned by a mixed and ruffianly crew of Etruscan and Sicilian sailors, little better indeed than pirates, who could tell what might be her lot, or if she would ever be heard of again? These men were ever ready to sell themselves to the highest bidder, and they were very highly paid for the great risks that they ran; but who could tell, if they had such a valuable prize as the daughter of Hannibal upon their vessel, to what uses they might not turn the possession of her person?

Upon these grounds Marcus felt himself bound to refuse to accede to her request. Therefore Elissa wrote to Scipio as follows:—

"From Elissa, daughter of Hannibal Barca, to Publius Cornelius Scipio.

"In the name of the great god Melcareth, and in the name of the sweet goddess of love Tanais, greeting. My lord Scipio, I write unto thee in Greek, even as thou didst unto me, for thy letter was duly delivered unto me in the camp at Abydos by Marcus Æmilius, through the intermediary of that very Cleandra unto whom Caius Lælius did send greetings.

"Thy servant Elissa was at that time in great tribulation of mind and body owing to the brutalities and wanton excesses of the Macedonian king, Philip, into whose hands the mighty gods, doubtless for the lowering of her pride, had surrendered her, helpless as the fly within the web of the spider, or the gazelle beneath the paw of the lion. Then was it that, with the nobility of soul that thy servant hath ever recognised in thee

since first we did meet at the court of King Syphax, thou didst with thy letter procure calm for a troubled mind, and pave the bridge of escape over the waters of despair. Know then this oh Scipio, I have carefully considered thy letter in all its bearings, and am convinced equally by the compassionate affection and the wisdom of thy words. Therefore is it that braving the probable anger of my father Hannibal, and trusting to the mercy of the almighty gods to rightly guide my footsteps, I am willing to do thy will and become thy wife, and am even now arrived as far as the city of Tarentum upon my way to meet thee. One condition alone do I impose upon thee, my lord Scipio, namely, that should I become thy wife before the expiration of six full moons from this, the day of my writing this letter, thou wilt not proceed further with thy preparations for the invasion of Carthaginian soil, and wilt do thine utmost to further the interests of peace between thy country and mine. Should ought occur to prevent my placing my hand in thine before the expiration of the soon advancing winter season, I do absolve thee from any condition whatever. Further, neither will this my writing, nor these my words be of any avail. For then it will be too late, and thou must perforce put thine army in motion. In such case must we both recognise that the gods themselves have willed matters thus. and that the time will be past both for thee and for me to think of joining our lives, whether with a view merely to our own mutual and personal happiness, or to the welfare of our respective nations. Yet would I gladly come to thee now, Scipio, ay, even by the very despatch vessel that beareth thee this my letter. Yet hath Marcus Æmilius not deemed it wise to allow my departure, and in all things have I hitherto found him a man of rectitude and honour. Much would I write to thee, oh Scipio, of all that hath happened to me since that day, now long gone by, when I, no more then actually than thy slave by right of capture, did embrace thee and call thee brother upon bidding thee farewell. Alas! that the gods did not then point out to me the right path, else had I never left thee, and never submitted to the horror of the embraces of a Philip, a monarch

unworthy of the name of king. Yet then was Maharbal still living, and I pledged; but now have I heard in Tarentum, even as thou didst write to me thyself, that both he and Chæras, and all the other leaders of the Numidians, fell with most of their men at Salapia, being caught without their horses, which were camped without the walls. Thus am I absolved from that ancient allegiance. Such is the will of the gods, and the fate of warriors and women. Even I. Elissa, since bidding thee last farewell, have been present in many bloody conflicts as of old: but now have I cast my sword and other arms into the waters, and renounced warfare for ever. Therefore, should it be the decree of Melcareth and of Tanais that we should eventually be joined as one, thou needest not fear in future, oh Scipio, for any such passages of arms beneath thy roof as when I did cast my javelines upon thee without the walls of the New Town, or strike down the men under Lælius in the palace garden. Nay, the only darts that thou wilt have to fear will be those from a woman's usual weapon, the tongue. And even they shall only be delivered when thou dost absent thyself too long from thine Elissa's side. Now, fare thee well, and may the gods preserve thee until we meet, and may that be soon! Commend me. I pray thee, to Caius Lælius: I was right loth to leave him in the ship before Syracuse without bidding him farewell, especially as he was lying wounded. But his is a noble heart like thine, Scipio, and he knew I could not do His flag-captain, who did espouse otherwise to get away. Cleandra, was afterward slain. Cleandra now doth love Æmilius, and would wed him, even when I wed thee. With this object in view, she beggeth me to crave the forgiveness of Lælius, that he will not enforce against her the rights against runaway And this, I know, he will not do, both for thy sake and for mine, for it was on my account only that Cleandra did Moreover, she was ever most tender and escape with me. watchful to him until then. And am not I, for that matter, thy runaway slave likewise? Farewell again, Scipio. I pray the gods may now lead our feet together into the paths of peace.

"(Sealed) ELISSA."

CHAPTER III.

A TERRIBLE SEA FIGHT.

ELISSA did not have so long to wait as she expected for a reply to her letter to Scipio, for the blockade-runner found him at Syracuse. Owing to her speed, the favourable breezes, and to clever seamanship, the quadrireme, having avoided all Carthaginian cruisers on the way, was back again and lying safely in the harbour of Tarentum within ten days of her departure. Her captain brought back with him a letter for Elissa, and definite instructions to Æmilius, who was instructed to come to Syracuse at once, while keeping well out to sea to avoid the rival fleets off Locri.

To Elissa Scipio responded with his usual delicacy of feeling, the joy and anticipation of probably soon meeting being so plainly evident that even Elissa's heart, which she had thought at rest, beat considerably faster than for long past as she read his words. To all that she proposed he had agreed, whether as regards the cessation of the preparations for the invasion of Africa, or the immunity of Cleandra from the consequences of her evasion of Caius. This he promised personally for his friend in his absence at the siege of Locri, on the south-east corner of the Bruttian peninsula, which was being besieged by forces of his both by land and sea.

Had Scipio but received Elissa's letter some time previously he would not have sent his troops to commence the siege of that city, so he said; but now the national honour was engaged on both sides, and there was no going back for one or for the other.

In conclusion, Scipio laughed at her fears lest they should not be wed in six months' time, and therefore not at all; for he said the merry wine-god Bacchus had appeared to him in a vision, and had distinctly told him that he should be joined to her in marriage by a hoary-headed priest with a snow-white beard down to the knees. Further, that after the nuptials there would be much consumption of wine. He reminded her that never yet had a heaven-sent vision of his failed to come true. He therefore bid Elissa be of good cheer, for, as he had told her years previously, they might yet rule the world together after all, and then would come the era of perpetual peace and universal happiness.

When Elissa read this letter the tears came to her eyes, but they were tears of joy. For she devoutly believed in Scipio's visions, and looked forward with unbounded delight to that era of perpetual peace which, after so many terrible years of misery, she should so soon help to inaugurate.

In the meanwhile the Carthaginian garrison of the town of Locri, aided by the Bruttian inhabitants, were making a most vigorous resistance, for they had the fate of the inhabitants of Tarentum before their eyes. They knew well that the Romans, who never once on Italian soil were able to defeat Hannibal in the field, upon recapture spared not from universal death or slavery the inhabitants of any of the cities, of no matter what nationality, which had from fear, self-interest, or compulsion, yielded to his arms.

In addition to Tarentum which, being near at hand, was the most lively example, the inhabitants of Locri had doubtless heard of the massacre, torture, and slavery of the inhabitants of Capua by Appius Claudius, and of the frightful scenes in Syracuse, which had been previously an ally of Rome for fifty years, upon its capture by Marcus Marcellus. Thus the wretched Locrini knew that there was nothing to expect save death for all the men and old women, and dishonour for all the young women, should the city fall.

And as it happened, once more by treachery from within, the city of Locri did fall, and fall upon the very day that Marcus Æmilius, with his three ships, was sailing due southwards from Tarentum past the Bruttian headlands, keeping, according to Scipio's instructions, well out to sea. At the very time that the three ships were, after having passed the Lacinian.

Promontory at a considerable distance, steering still due southwards, some of the most horrible atrocities and cruelties that the world has ever known were being enacted in the streets and the interiors of the houses of Locri.

On that particular day it would have been far better for the Romans on the three ships if they had kept closer into the land and coasted close down the shore, for suddenly, although well out to sea, the three Roman vessels found themselves sur rounded by a mass of fishing vessels, small boats, luggers, and even by several small war pinnaces. All of these were crowded with miserable fugitives, laden with all kinds of articles of furniture, weighing the boats down to the water's edge. men with white hair, women with babies in their arms, young marriageable girls, these were the chief occupants of the boats. There was a small number of able-bodied rowers also. poor wretches had evidently not waited for the actual fall of the town, but had started to fly as soon as the ramparts were first stormed, having got their boats all ready in advance. They were all steering northwards for the city of Croton, lying behind the Lacinian Promontory, then in the occupation of Hannibal, and were taking the shortest cut across the arc of the very considerable bay which lies behind a headland a few miles to the north of Locri.

Seeing the three war vessels in the offing, the flying Locrini thought, from the direction in which they were coming, that they were three Carthaginian warships coming from Croton; therefore they all rushed in a confused mass towards them for safety. This mistake of theirs was the more excusable inasmuch that, for fear of being discerned from the Lacinian Promontory on passing, the three Roman vessels were flying Carthaginian colours.

It was not until the first of the boats had actually met them, and when the whole sea in front was so encumbered that progress was almost impossible, that it dawned upon Æmilius and his captains what it all meant. And then at a considerable distance, in fact, from just behind the headland lying to the morth of Locri, they could see some ten or twelve Roman war

vessels advancing, with a steady sweep of the oars, in a line, pursuing these poor wretches. Their progress was slow, for hey stopped to rifle all the boats they overtook, and themselves put out boats full of armed men, for that purpose. All the old men, the sailors, and the elderly women were ruthlessly cut down and slaughtered, while the babies were torn from their mothers, and thrown into the water. The young women. owever, were seized, thrown violently down into the bottom f the boats, and then conveyed to the war vessels, where their hands and feet were lashed with roughly-tied ropes. There they were left in a struggling mass, writhing and screaming on the decks, while the work of capture and murder proceeded as before. The whole air was full of the screams of the dving. the water full of drowning people and sinking boats; but the cries of the women whose babies were torn from them and thrown into the water were the worst and most agonising of all.

Before Marcus Æmilius had time to change the Carthaginian colours on the masts for Roman ones, which it was necessary to do lest they should be shortly attacked by their own advancing war-ships, the unhappy creatures in the boats were closing upon them on all sides, and swarming up the sides of the ships, or clinging to the oars in all directions.

Now, sighting a fleet of twenty Carthaginian vessels just appearing in their rear from behind the Lacinian Promontory, the Romans knew that they must be taken unless they could extricate themselves in time from the swarming wretches whose boats were not only delaying them, but whose numbers, if they gained the decks, would sink them.

Therefore, with every kind of implement, from spear, sword, or axe, down to capstan-bar, or belaying-pin, were the Romans now bound, in absolute self-defence, to strike down mercilessly the miserable, unarmed creatures who were clinging to the oars and climbing up the sides. In many cases the women threw their babies on board the ships first, then themselves climbed up after them, and for a time, at least, a considerable number were continually gaining the decks, only to be cut

down and thrust overboard again. The water was red with blood, and the oars clogged with the long hair of dead and living which had got twisted and entangled round them. And of all this terrible sight were Elissa and Cleandra the horrified and unwilling spectators.

At length the people in the remaining boats seemed to realise the situation. Leaving the three ships clear, they commenced to row well outside of them to the right and the left. Then turning their prows to the eastward, the three Roman ships charged with all their oars the now attenuated line of boats on that side, and thus by smashing some up, and passing clean over others, they gained the open waters. Rowing with all their might, and steering at first due eastward, it seemed for a time as if they would clear the left flank of the advancing line of Carthaginian ships, many of which were now hampered with the fugitive boats as they had been themselves. And the greater number stopped to take on board the survivors. there were five ships on the extreme Carthaginian left which had particularly fast rowers, and it was impossible to clear them. Turning their heads south once more, the Romans tried to join the squadron of twelve which had come in pursuit of the boats. But these, now being full of female captives and other spoils, were in full retreat for the harbour of Locri, outside which lay the main body of the Roman fleet under command of Caius Lælius.

Caius had, as usual upon such occasions, himself landed with a storming party, and knew nothing of this affair, especially as the fugitives had got well away to the north before being discovered. At length, seeing that three of the Carthaginian vessels only were gaining upon them, while the other two were now a long way astern, Marcus Æmilius determined to fight. He signalled to his other two ships to slacken speed, then to turn round, halt, and lay upon their oars.

"Get ready to lower the crows," he cried, "and let the boarders be ready standing by them."

The "crows," long and wide gangways with an iron spike at the higher end, were fixed to the foremasts, round which they revolved on an iron ring at the bottom, the spike end being near the mast-head, to which they were held by pulleys. Men now stood holding the ends of these pulleys ready to let go. The three Carthaginian ships were coming near at hand—two quinquiremes and one gigantic hexireme—the latter being the one that Æmilius determined to charge himself. Before the shock of the contact Marcus perceived the two ladies standing on the poop. Doffing his helmet, he kissed both their hands in turn.

"Fair lady Elissa, if I cannot bear thee to a loving and expectant husband in the Consul Scipio, there is one thing I can do—I can fight and die like a man. That is what it must come to; there are five ships of your countrymen to three of mine. If we conquer the first three, the two others will come with fresh men, and both, I see, are hexiremes. They will crush us! Maybe one of our three ships may escape; it will not be mine, for I shall not retreat unless we can defeat in time our three present opponents, and so can all escape together. Ladies, take ye this Carthaginian flag, and should matters be critical, then hold it aloft over your bodies—it may prove your salvation." Then he added, "Farewell, beloved Cleandra, one last embrace!"

Cleandra sprung into his arms, her face white and pale, but determined. Elissa, who had been in many fights, had never looked more noble than did now Cleandra, who had never yet been present in the actual warfare of hand-to-hand combat.

"Fight, my noble Marcus!" she cried. "Fight nobly and fight well, and in this battle, for thy sake, I will fight, too; and if thou diest I will die, since, save for the lady Elissa's sake, I am, through my love for thee, a very Roman even as thou art."

She clung to him one moment only, their lips met, then without another word she released him and waved him forward. Stooping, she herself picked up a battle-axe, all bloody as it was with the gore of recent victims.

Then there was a fearful crash. All the six ships were in violent collision at once. The two women both lost their feet,

but jumping up again, saw the crows falling with a smashing blow clear over the bulwarks of the Carthaginian ships, the iron beaks fixing themselves in the decks, and thus binding the hostile vessels together side by side.

In a second, taking the Carthaginians by surprise in their rush, the Roman boarders sprung along the crows and fell upon the foemen on their own decks.

Æmilius had disappeared in the throng, and long the battle raged, unevenly at first, and then entirely in favour of the Romans, who slaughtered unmercifully. When nearly all the Carthaginian marines were slain, suddenly the Romans, by order, rushed back to their ships, along the crows or over the sides. Æmilius re-appeared upon his own deck, apparently unwounded save for a small stream of blood trickling down his cheek.

"Raise the crows swiftly!" he shouted, "and backwater with all the oars." For he saw that there was a fair chance of escape, and with honour, the other two Carthaginian ships being still some way off. He might even yet carry Elissa home in safety to the Consul Scipio. And there would have been a chance of escape for the whole three ships had it not so happened that, by mischance, the rope of the crow upon his own ship had run out of the block or pulley, and was lying useless on the deck. The crow could not be raised.

"Escape!" he cried to those on the two other ships, "escape at once, and tell Scipio that I did my duty." For he saw that they had their crows raised, and could get away easily; in fact, they were already at some distance, and moving astern.

But they were men of mettle, and would not escape to leave their comrades behind. Even as the two fresh Carthaginian hexiremes closed up, one on each side of the ship of Æmilius, which was still locked with the hexireme first engaged, the two outside Roman ships returned and closed in upon their outer sides. Down fell the crows once more, the spikes penetrating the decks, and once more the battle was raging on all sides, and it raged with fury. At length, Æmilius, quite tired out, was beaten to his knees by a heavy sword blow, which, falling

on the junction of neck and shoulder, went through the leather armour-flaps lying between helmet and cuirass.

Like a tigress Cleandra sprung to his side, and, with a terrible blow with her war axe, clove his assailant's skull in twain before he could repeat the blow. A Carthaginian soldier behind the fallen man now pierced her in turn with a spear, full in the bosom. She fell upon Æmilius, her life-blood mingling with his own, while a Roman struck down the Carthaginian who had pierced Cleandra.

At length, it was becoming evident that the Romans were overmatched by these two ships full of fresh men. Moreover, the oarsmen of the first hexireme had now left their banks of oars, and arming themselves with the arms of dead comrades or of foemen, were joining in the fray.

Elissa stood on the end of the poop looking on. Carthaginian flag was lying on the taffrail, and, unaware of what she was doing, she was leaning against it, clasping it with one hand. While she was standing thus, there came surging forward from one of the other ships, upon the bloody deck of that whereon she stood herself, an enormous man, a regular giant. He was smiting with a double-edged sword to right and left, and clearing as he went a lane before him. The affrighted and wearied-out Romans still alive upon Elissa's ship fled before him, and crossing the Carthaginian ships, sprung to their outer vessels, and attempted to cast loose the crows again. One, and one ship only succeeded in so doing, and now the battle was ending, indeed ended. At that moment the giant arrived, with his bloody sword raised, before Hannibal's daughter herself. He saw the Carthaginian flag, and it caught his attention before he recognised the woman's face. Then he knew her again.

"Elissa! Art not thou Elissa? By the great gods, 'tis Elissa herself!"

But she had recognised him for several moments past, despite his scarred cheek and grizzling hair. Thinking him dead, she had been watching him spell-bound, fancying that she saw a spirit.

"Ay, Maharbal, I am Elissa, even Hannibal's daughter. And thou, art thou indeed Maharbal in the flesh? I heard that thou wast slain at Salapia."

"And what dost thou on this Roman ship, Elissa? As for me, thou seest I was but half slain, since I have just slain half of these Romans in revenge."

"I was on my way from Philip of Macedon, from whom these Romans did rescue me; and I was about to marry Cornelius Scipio, and thus bring about a peace between Carthage and Rome." She looked him calmly in the face as she replied thus.

"Thou marry Scipio! By Moloch, never! That intention of thine I have, thank the gods, now frustrated."

Maharbal cried thus, furiously gnashing his teeth, for he had in years gone by heard reports about his lady-love and Scipio which had not pleased him greatly. He turned and roared out furiously to those on the Roman vessel which was just sheering off.

"Hark, ye Roman dogs! tell ye Scipio from me that it is Maharbal, the son of Manissa, who hath once again frustrated him—say that the said Maharbal, who hath thrice spared the dog Scipio's life, is by no means disposed to accord him in addition his own intended wife; nay, not for any Roman jackdaw, thinking himself an eagle, is Elissa, Hannibal's daughter. Now, go!" he added, in a voice of thunder. He spoke clearly, and in excellent Latin, and every word of the insulting message was understood.

As the Carthaginians were quite unable to pursue, the Roman vessel got away in safety, bearing with it only a small living remnant of each of the original crews of the three ships.

When Maharbal turned back to Elissa he found her paying no regard to him whatever; she was, he saw, down upon her knees by a dying woman and a dying man. And the woman had her arm around the man's neck.

"It is Cleandra," said Elissa sadly; "dost thou not remember her, Maharbal? And now one of thy ruffians hath slain

her. Oh, my poor faithful, good Cleandra!" And stooping down she kissed her on the lips.

The dying woman recognised the Numidian hero, her friend since earliest youth.

"Maharbal!" said Cleandra, in a faint voice, "be kind to Elissa, and I will pray the gods for thee. I shall see them soon." She added still more faintly, "Fare thee well, Elissa; I did ever love thee faithfully." Then she turned towards Æmilius, feebly placed her lips on his, gave a shudder, and died.

A shiver passed through the form of the Roman at the very same instant. He also was now dead.

Elissa rose, her dress all dabbled in blood.

"And yet," she said fiercely to Maharbal, "even amid scenes like this," and she pointed with open hand at the dead couple lying at her feet, "thou canst thank the gods, Maharbal, that thou hast frustrated my intention of marrying Scipio, thereby to bring about a peace between Carthage and Rome. Well, thank the gods if thou wilt, thou art nought to me, thou bloody man! Begone from my sight! Begone I say, and leave me here with my dead, whom thou and thine have slain." She stamped her foot.

As many a courageous and bloodthirsty man has been before, he was utterly cowed by the righteous anger of a woman.

In such sad wise was, after many years, the meeting again of Maharbal and Elissa. He, bold warrior as he was, slunk off to give some orders to his men, feeling, he knew not why, that whereas a minute ago it had been Elissa who was most terribly, irretrievably in the wrong, now he had himself done something that he feared she might never forgive throughout his lifetime.

Thus can a fearless and clever woman ever turn the tables upon a man, in the most tragic as in the most trivial moments of existence.

CHAPTER IV.

ELISSA'S MISERY.

It was not to a bed of roses that Elissa returned when she fir, rejoined her father in his camp upon the Lacinian Promontory. The world had not been using him well, and his formerly jovial temper was considerably embittered in consequence. He hated the Romans more than ever, and was most contented that his daughter had been prevented from carrying out her intended union with Scipio. But he was above everything just, and saw in her intention her wish to act for her country's welfare; but while at heart approving her motive, he objected to the actual intention itself, and would have been furious had it been successfully carried out.

With regard to Philip of Macedon he felt differently. He was proud of his daughter, and openly praised her for her self-sacrifice in that matter. It was not her fault if her country had not reaped all the advantages that it might have done from her nobility of soul and self-abnegation. Hannibal recognised them all the same.

Thus after a time, when father and daughter had, so to speak, renewed each other's acquaintance, confidence was restored. Hannibal ceased to blame her even in the matter of Scipio, when he learned at the beginning of the spring that Scipio had actually at length passed over into Numidia and was laying siege to the city of Utica, while Caius Lælius was devastating the coasts with his ships. And Hannibal well knew there was now no general capable enough on Carthaginian soil to combat the invader with any hopes of success. All this might have been prevented if Elissa had only got safe through to Sicily.

While Hannibal still maintained his own upon Italian soil, almost capturing the town of Rhegium at the extreme south, and being successful in other directions whenever he chose to

assue from his entrenchments, there ever continued to come bad news from Numidia.

While Scipio was over-running Numidia from end to end, avoiding any walled towns, save only Utica, and capturing all to unwalled cities, Utica held out nobly; and eventually, so a lant was her resistance, that the siege was raised by Scipio ranaval battle in which the Romans were defeated.

After the raising of the siege of Utica, the party of Hanno sent envoys to Rome to try to make a peace, and this with Scipio's approval, for he had himself dictated the terms. He had been everywhere successful except before Utica, nearly all the army of Carthage had been destroyed, and having won quite sufficient military glory, he was thinking how Elissa might even yet be his, if only a peace could be quickly brought about. Great warrior as he was, he was absolutely sated with blood, and would willingly have given to humanity, had it been possible, a cessation from warfare.

Meanwhile Hannibal remained in Italy, with as much confidence and security as though it were his own property. And so indeed was his corner of the mighty peninsula, which he had over-run from end to end, and whence, had he but had the necessary reinforcements sent to him, he would have been ready at any time to spring forth once more like a lion and devastate the fair Italian plains, right back to those Alps whence he had long years before descended upon this promised land. But where now were all those to whom he had promised it? How many were left of the original band who had set out with him upon that wonderful march from Spain? Of all the generals and captains who had started on that journey Maharbal alone. remained. Chœras, the cheery, light-hearted poet, had been slain at Salapia, and all those of superior rank who had marched across the Ebro were dead also-Monomachus, Hanno, Hasdrubal the pioneer, and thousands more, ay, even Hasdrubal the brother of Hannibal, who had marched over the Alps to join him, all—all were gone! Only old Sosilus still remained. No wonder that Elissa found her father morose and inclined

to find fault with a pitiless fate which had allowed the miserable ineptitude of the rulers in Carthage to rob him of the benefit of all his victories, of all his many years of warfare, and which had cost him the lives of nearly all his old friends, and given no commensurate return.

But still, not all the twenty legions that had been raised that year in Italy could put him out of that last corner of Italy which he had selected for his own. There he sat, like an eagle upon the rock; and still, when like the eagle he chose to sally forth and swoop over the plain, even as the frightened game flying before the monarch of the skies would the Roman legions retire before him in the open and take shelter in walled towns or strongly-entrenched encampments, which, owing to his reduced numbers, he was unable to besiege. And thus it remained to the end. Hannibal was never defeated in Italy.

Meanwhile, her father's original attachment to Maharbal had, Elissa found, gone on increasing, if possible, through all the years that they had fought side by side, and especially since he had so nearly lost his noble lieutenant's life at the terrible slaughter of the Numidians at Salapia. From that place, wounded in half-a-dozen places, he had been one of the very few who had managed to cut their way through to the horses.

But now, poor Maharbal was but general of the Numidians in name, for there were no more than at most some seventy-five of the far-famed Numidians left. And to his great chagrin, his cousin Massinissa, after killing his uncle, King Syphax, in Numidia, had now placed many thousands of Numidian cavalry in the field on Carthaginian soil, side by side with the Romans. For he had, so it was rumoured, added all the forces of the late King Syphax to his own, and all were in active alliance with Scipio against Carthage.

Maharbal was now often almost as morose and moody as Hannibal himself; but the Numidian had an extra cause for sorrow. For throughout the whole of his long years of warrings in Italy, he had remained faithful to Elissa. And now he found that she had ceased to love him. He had been quite prepared

to overlook her doubtful alliance with King Philip of Macedon: but he found, to his surprise, that no magnanimity was required upon his side, for Elissa would have nothing of him. been ready to excuse both the original flirtation with Scipio at the Court of Syphax, of which an exaggerated report had reached him, and also her later determination to marry Scipio; but he discovered that to be excused either on the one count or the other was the very last thing that Elissa herself desired. In fact she deliberately refused to acknowledge his right to interfere in, question, or condone her conduct from any point of And he felt somehow that through the barrier of reserve. which she had raised from the very moment of their meeting again, it would be far more difficult for him to break than it would have been for him to break down, single-handed, the Colline gate of the walls of Rome, over which Hannibal had cast his spear in token of defiance.

It was not that he found her hard to him, for, on the contrary, she was gentle; but she was no longer in love with him; she was indifferent. There is nothing so terrible for a man to contend against in the woman who once loved him with all her heart and soul, with every fibre of her frame, than this same indifference, that is, if he love her still himself. Now, Maharbal loved Elissa still, and the more indifferent she showed herself to him, the more he loved her. But it is not to be wondered at if, after all she had gone through, Elissa could not find it in her to rush violently all at once into a renewal of her former relations with Maharbal. Not only were all her dreams of an Utopia with Scipio now dashed to the ground, but she heard daily of the terrible reverses that had occurred to her beloved Carthage, which she had never seen, owing to the failure of her marriage with him.

And who was it who had been the direct cause of her failing to join Scipio in Syracuse but Maharbal himself, who had detached five warships from the fleet, and captured her and killed her friends. Was not poor Cleandra's death directly attributable to Maharbal? and who, in all her life, had been such a friend to her as Cleandra? And was not Æmilius her friend?

He had saved her from the court of Philip, and yet Maharbal or his men—it was the same thing—had killed him.

"What," thought Elissa, "has Maharbal ever given to me like the devotion of a Cleandra, the love of a Scipio—ay, or even the courtesy of a Lælius or an Æmilius?" Was it sufficient for Maharbal to leave her alone for year after year, when he might have visited her instead of her uncle Mago? Was it enough for him, while taking his fill of the life he delighted in—a life of blood and military glory—to continue to love her at a distance, and to expect her to fall at his feet at his bidding after all, just because fate or chance placed her in his way? "No," cried Elissa to herself; "a thousand times no!" and she thought of the old days, when she had wept her eyes out for Maharbal, while he was with Melania at the court of King Andobales, and stamped with her feet upon the ground with rage to think that she ever had been such a fool.

But now she was so utterly miserable, so distressed at Cleandra's death, so disappointed at the terrible failure of her grand plans for the happiness of the world in conjunction with Scipio, that really this matter of Maharbal scarcely interested her. She had lived too much, seen too much, suffered too much! So she told him plainly one day that he must be content with the past. It might now indeed seem to both of them almost as a dream. Well, so much the better! A dream it must remain, for anything now more approaching a reality was utterly impossible. And with that she left him.

CHAPTER V.

HIS LEGAL WIFE.

MEANWHILE the Carthaginian embassy to Rome to sue for terms of peace had not been a success. It was owing to the atrocious behaviour of the Carthaginian party themselves, who had endeavoured to cast the whole blame of the war from start to finish upon Hannibal, and Hannibal alone, that the negotiations broke down.

For the Roman Senate were not children, and there were so many issues at stake in which it could be clearly proved that the Carthaginians, entirely apart from Hannibal, had held the leading hand, that the Romans were disgusted at their excuses.

For the Senate well knew that, while the people in Carthage had been glad enough to vaunt Hannibal's victories, they had, from jealousy, never supported him properly, or Rome might now have been a mere province of Carthage. They also divined that, defeated in their own country, the Carthaginians were treacherously inclined to give to Rome as a scapegoat the glorious hero who, alone, unaided, and deserted by his country, had won victory upon victory throughout three-quarters of the then known world.

Therefore the Roman Senate refused the terms of peace, and ordained that Scipio should go on with the war or get better terms.

Scipio was personally annoyed at the failure of the negotiations, for he had ever the same object in view, the long-deferred hope of the possession as his bride of the beloved Elissa. He had suffered much since her recapture by her own countrymen off Locri, and, were it only for revenge upon Maharbal, whose insulting message he had received, he longed more than ever to marry her. But, all question of revenge apart, since the

letters that had passed between them, and when she had so nearly reached his outstretched arms, he felt that he loved her more than ever—more than it seemed possible for any man on earth to love a woman.

Instead, therefore, of carrying on the war, Scipio for a while continued the truce, pretending to play with the Carthaginian envoys to deceive Rome, and with the Roman envoys to deceive Carthage.

For he argued: "Did I not see the wine-god Bacchus in a vision? and did he not tell me that I shall be married to Elissa by a priest with a long beard flowing to his knees? and has ever yet one of my visions proved false?" For by this time he had himself really begun to believe in these visions or dreams which had for so long been believed in by others.

Scipio being thus inclined, peace might have been made, after all, but for the treachery of the Carthaginians, who seized, during a time of truce, upon some Roman transports full of provisions, which had been driven ashore in a storm. After this no further ideas of peace were possible, and Scipio recommenced the war with all the more fury because he feared that he must for ever renounce his dearest hopes.

The cowardly Carthaginians, who had neglected him for so many years, now wrote letters recalling Hannibal to the country which he had not seen since he was a boy of nine, for they wanted him to come and defend them. They also sent for his brother Mago, from Capua; but the noble Mago, Maharbal's friend, was wounded on his way down in a drawn battle in the country of the Insubrian Gauls, and died at sea; never living to greet either his brother or his friend Maharbal again, nor indeed to see even his native soil once more.

Hannibal and his daughter, and Maharbal and all the troops, however, obeyed the summons, thus voluntarily this wonderful general left the country out of which the Romans would never have been able to drive him.

"Oh! Elissa, Elissa!" cried the warrior, as for once, weak as a woman, he fell upon his daughter's breast in the temple of Juno Lacinia. "Oh, my daughter, comfort me, comfort me!

for truly the gods have laid a heavy hand upon me, or why should I leave this fair country of Italy without first taking Rome? See, on yonder brazen tablets, all the exploits I have had carved in three languages for future generations to read, yet one is not there inscribed. All mention that there is of Rome is that I threw my javeline over the wall. Oh! my countrymen, my countrymen! if ye had but supported me it would not now be on Carthaginian soil that my services would be required. Alas! for Rome untaken. Alas! alas! Comfort me, oh, my daughter!"

It was a terrible moment for Elissa, almost as terrible as for the great warrior himself, for to both of them it was the moment when, no matter what had been the untiring efforts of each in the country's cause—no matter what had been the successes, the end had come, and that end, after long years of noble struggle, meant for both a confession of utter failure of bitter, terrible failure.

But let us draw a veil over that hour of bitter grief in the temple of Juno Lacinia. Let us leave father and daughter alone in their sorrow—alone in the darkening shades of night, with nought but the dull red glow of the scarcely-burning sacrificial fire to cast a lowering gleam of brightness through the thickening gloom around.

A fortnight later Hannibal had landed with all his troops, and they were comparatively few, at Adrumentum, on the eastern coast of what is now known as Tunisia, and upon arriving there he determined to put into force, while waiting to collect an army, a project that he had had in his head for some time past. This was no less than the union by marriage of Elissa with Maharbal. Two reasons had he for wishing to bring this about without delay. One was that he considered that after many years of long and faithful services, his noble lieutenant deserved the only reward that he could give him; the other, that now that both his brethren were dead, he wished to raise up posterity to himself in his own direct line.

Of Maharbal's views he had no doubt, but he was by no means so sure of Elissa. Upon his questioning her he found her distinctly averse to the marriage. She would give no reason save that she did not now wish to marry Maharbal. He had not come to espouse her when he might have done so years before, and now her heart was not what it was when a mere girl. She did not wish to marry him. At length her father twitted her with loving Scipio. She confessed plainly that she did love Scipio; but said that she did not, now that marriage between them could be of no use to their country, wish to marry him either. It was clearly impossible. Here she gave Hannibal an opening.

"Marry for thy country's sake, Elissa? Why, 'tis the very thing I would have thee to do. By all the gods! Maharbal doth love thee truly, and hath he not fought for thy country for all these years with the sole hope of thee as his reward? And now that thou art here and art unmarried, and far more beautiful even than thou wast as a young girl, wilt thou deny him the reward which he hath well merited at his country's hands in the shape of Hannibal's only daughter for his bride?"

"My father," replied Elissa, "since we have, by the ruling of the great gods, come to live together again, ever have I been submissive to thee. Yet wilt thou own that mine, as apart from thine own, hath been an independent career, throughout which I have continually striven to carry out the precepts which thou didst thyself instil into me in early youth. Only once did I neglect to follow them, yet that neglect didst thou thyself condone, while punishing me by depriving me of this very Maharbal, who was then my lover.

"Since then, my father, have I learnt to look upon all as a matter of policy. Policy it would indeed have been had I married Scipio, and, would to all the gods of Carthage and of Rome combined, that, for the sake alone of Carthage, I had been permitted to do so. But putting this love of his for me apart, wherein lies the policy of my now espousing Maharbal the Numidian? Noble he is, I vow, and much, ay, very much in him do I admire, chiefly his great devotion to thyself, which

caused him to neglect me when I was younger and more impressionable. But, father! wherein lies the policy?"

"The policy—'tis simple enough, child! 'tis because he is a Numidian! Through him we may win back all the other Numidians, ay even Massinissa and his crew, or certainly all the old followers of Syphax may desert to us, and there are others. Notably, there is a Numidian prince named Tychæus, who hath several thousand horsemen, who might join us for the sake of Maharbal."

Elissa pondered a moment, then answered:

"But will they not join thee without my marrying Maharbal? Is not he sufficiently devoted to thee to ask their services on thy behalf without claiming now from me the hand he did not care to seek years ago when it was his without question? At least, so I gathered from mine uncle Mago."

Hannibal became impatient.

"Do as thou wilt, thou headstrong woman!" he cried. "Wouldst thou have a man give me all and I give him nothing in return? Dost thou call that either patriotism or devotion to thy father's cause? And is it not now thy father's name and his alone that doth represent the highest interests of thy country to all the rest of the world if not to thee?" He turned angrily as if to leave her.

Elissa turned very pale, but gently laid a restraining hand upon her father's sleeve.

"Very well, my father, I agree, but upon the condition that our marriage be kept quite secret."

"Secret!" answered Hannibal testily; "wherefore secret?"
"Simply that Scipio may not know of it," she answered sadly. "'Twould but enrage him the more, and do no good. Thou mayest yet some day, oh my father, have reason to desire the good offices of Scipio, and," she sighed deeply, "although, before the gods, I would not willingly deceive him, through whom could those good offices be so easily obtained as through me? Therefore, 'twould, methinks, be perchance more politic to keep it secret should I marry Maharbal. Then will I yield to thy wishes in this matter, and feel,

moreover, that I am not, in so yielding, doing unto my country any possible injury. The country, thou knowest, oh my father, is above all. I have now no wish for marriage; but if thou deem it for our country's welfare, I obey."

"Ay," replied Hannibal, stooping down and kissing her, at the same time stroking her hair caressingly, "thou hast said the truth, Elissa. The country is to be considered before all, and secrecy is advisable. It shall be kept a secret."

On the following day Elissa became the wife of Maharbal. But none knew that she was actually his legal wife save the priest who united them in Hannibal's presence alone. And Hannibal threatened to cut out his tongue if ever he should breathe a word of the matter to a living soul. So the priest's silence was assured.

Thus did Maharbal obtain his heart's desire, and thus did Elissa once again do her duty to her father and her country. And having now married Maharbal, she strove to make him happy.

When once more upon his native soil, Hannibal was not the man to let the grass grow under his feet. He was not long in organising an army from one source and another, and soon he had collected a large force of infantry and a considerable number of elephants; he only wanted cavalry to make up an army which, in Italy, would have been irresistible.

CHAPTER VI.

A MOMENTOUS MEETING.

ALTHOUGH Maharbal's union with Elissa was kept absolutely secret, yet, since he lived in the same building as that which his Chief had selected as his head-quarters, it was easy for him to be with her at all times. Moreover, since he was Hannibal's right-hand man, there were none who dared to criticise the terms of intimacy upon which he might be with Hannibal's daughter. In years gone by, she had been looked upon as being virtually his wife, and it had been well known in those days that it was only the dislike on the part of Hannibal to his officers being married just before going on a campaign that had prevented the union being then acknowledged. Now there were none of the superior officers still alive who had left Spain with Hannibal at the beginning of the Italian war, and, of all others present, none dared to cast an aspersion upon the daughter of their great Chief and greatest and most daring General, especially as her unusual intimacy with Maharbal apparently met with the Chief's own approval.

Thus it came to pass that during the few months passed at Adrumentum, Elissa, while still passing as an unmarried woman, was constantly in her husband's society, and that gradually his single-mindedness, his frank boyishness of character, which years of campaigning and bloodshed had been unable to spoil, won somewhat upon her once more. It was by degrees certainly, but they won upon her all the same.

Maharbal was ever so diffident, so conscious of his own shortcomings, so ready to make excuses for everything in Elissa's own past life, that it would have been wonderful indeed, if, after having once become his actual wife, she had not considerably melted towards him.

He, poor fellow, recognised the barrier at first, and with reason put it down to his own fault in that he had not come back to her when Hannibal had given him, upon two occasions, the opportunity of doing so. He was now inclined to blame himself for his behaviour upon those occasions, and treated his wife, in consequence, with an amount of delicacy and respect which could scarcely have been expected in a man whose whole life had been passed in scenes of carnage and slaughter.

But although a soldier, and even at times a cruel soldier, his own life had ever been absolutely pure. As Scipio had been in the Roman army, so had Maharbal been in the Carthaginian army. In an era when rapine was law, when lust in its most brutal forms was not merely tolerated but approved, each had selected for himself a higher standard than that of the age. The unfortunate thing was that they had both placed their whole affections upon the same woman, that that woman had loved each in turn, and that, strive how she might, she had been unable to fulfil her duty, or what she considered her whole duty to either of them. For what she gave to one she took from the other.

Poor Elissa! It were useless to say that she ought only to have loved one of them. Now, living with Maharbal, and being a woman of great acumen, she soon recognised his greatness, and her mistake in having condemned him too readily. For it became patent to her that it was no idea of his own selfaggrandisement, his own military glory, that had kept him from her side, but solely love and devotion to her own father. an open simple nature like his, there was no concealment possible from such a clever woman as herself. Therefore, she very soon learned the secret of the terrible act of self-renunciation which the young warrior must have put upon himself at the time that he allowed her uncle Mago to return to Iberia and New Carthage in his place, when he might have come back himself to find a loving bride. As all this dawned upon her, Elissa respected Maharbal more and more. She even loved him in

a way, yet it was never in the old way of early girlhood. For all that, from sheer gratitude, she tried to persuade herself, and easily succeeded in persuading him, that the old passion had come back again with all its old intensity. Thus was she more nearly happy than she had been for years past, while she made Maharbal supremely so.

While Hannibal was collecting troops at his head-quarters at Adrumentum, he had not forgotten his idea of recruiting as many Numidian cavalry as possible. For this purpose he sent Maharbal with a large escort, to visit various Numidian chieftains, and upon this expedition, although having for appearance sake a separate guard and a separate camp, Elissa accompanied him.

The Roman armies had not traversed the districts of Libya through which the Carthaginians were travelling, and as, for the first time in her life, Elissa rode through the green fertile hills and villages of Northern Africa, the tears came into her eyes at the peaceful beauty of the scene, and with grief at the idea that all might soon be laid waste and destroyed by the hand of the invader.

They had, however, a prosperous journey through the highlands and lowlands lying on the banks of the winding Bagradus, and were hospitably received at the city of the Numidian Prince Tychæus. This prince, a kinsman to Maharbal, was at first loth to join Hannibal for fear of their mutual kinsman Massinissa; but Elissa's beautiful eyes being once turned upon the young Numidian, carried the day, for their soul-stirring appeal went deep down into his heart far more than all the arguments of Maharbal. The result was that upon their return to the head-quarters camp at Adrumentum, Maharbal and Hannibal's daughter carried back with them in their train not only the Prince Tychæus himself, but also two thousand of his Numidian cavalry, whereupon Hannibal determined upon taking the field instantly, and seeking Scipio without more delay.

After Hannibal had once taken the field, confidence was restored to an enormous extent throughout Libya, while the inhabitants of Carthage, from having fallen to a state of the utmost gloom and desnondency, became elated to the highest degree. The foolish Carthaginians, who had, since the time of Hamilear, deteriorated more and more under the long-continued ascendancy of the party of Hanno, now gave way to the greatest excesses, so certain were they that their delivery was at hand. Hence, not only did the horrible sacrifices to Moloch continue, or rather, re-commence in full swing, but the worship of Tanais, the Carthaginian Venus, was celebrated with an amount of debauchery that had never been known before. Instead of devoting all their energies to assisting the lion of Iberia and Italy, the inhabitants of Carthage, under the pretence of thanking the gods for the mercies vouchsafed to them in sending Hannibal to the rescue, vowed their slaves to Moloch, and their daughters to Tanais. As regards the actual war, they had sent to Hannibal a contingent of untrained men and of untrained eienhants, that was enough. Hannibal was expected to do all the rest. And although in his heart he despised—av. utterly despised this people of Carthage—he determined to do the best he could with the materials at his command. But neither in quantity nor in quality were his new Carthaginian recruits what he would have wished, deteriorated as they were by all the vices of the city of modern Carthage. He, however, received valuable assistance at this period from Philip of Macedon, who sent a considerable reinforcement of good troops. Hannibal now marched across Libya from east to west, and had various small successes over occasional detachments of Roman soldiers whom he met with on his way. At length he found himself face to face with the whole of Scipio's army near a little town called Zama.

Elissa had accompanied her father upon the line of march, and occupied a tent adjacent to his own. Once they had taken the field, there was no more intimacy between Maharbal and his wife than had she been the unmarried woman she was supposed to be.

When the two armies were still lying inactive face to face off Zama, the same idea of a personal parley occurred to both of the commanders; but Scipio it was who first put the idea into words. He sent a herald with great state to Hannibal's camp with a letter.

In this letter he demanded a personal interview with Hannibal ere they should decide the most momentous issue at stake in mortal combat. And as he knew that Hannibal's daughter spoke Greek, a language with which he was well acquainted, he requested that she might be present at the interview and serve, moreover, as interpreter between them.

Hannibal accepted the invitation, and on the following morning rode out into the plain separating the two armies, with his staff officers and his daughter Elissa. The latter was attired in the garments of a young Carthaginian nobleman, for although she had discarded her arms for ever, she had assumed manly raiment upon taking the field. She was gorgeously clad in raiment of light blue and silver, which, closely fitting her figure, showed off to the greatest advantage the charms of her person. Upon her head she wore a little silver casque surmounted with wings. As she rode up upon her black charger, which she bestrode gallantly Numidian-wise, being seated upon a pale blue and silver saddle-cloth, she looked, so thought Scipio, as she approached, like some delicate youth of sixteen. Her colouring was perfect, for, owing to the fresh air in which she daily lived, Elissa was at this time in the very perfection of feminine health and beauty.

Scipio was waiting in a group of palm trees, to which, having left his staff officers at a distance, Hannibal advanced with Elissa. Scipio sent all his own attendants to the rear as he saw Hannibal and his daughter approaching. He dismounted, and giving his horse to a gorgeously-attired slave, sent the man with the charger back out of earshot. Then saluting the great Carthaginian conqueror and his daughter most courteously, the great Roman conqueror advanced, and giving his hand to Elissa, assisted her to alight.

And what an appealing look was there in that noble face as it looked upwards into the beautiful eyes above him!

As Elissa involuntarily returned the pressure of the hand that held hers, she could feel the pulses beating rapidly in its veins, while she felt her heart throbbing painfully. She turned pale as she met that fervent glance.

"Elissa, I have ever loved thee."

"Scipio, thou hast been ever in my prayers."

Unheard by Hannibal, whom a slave was helping to dismount, these two short sentences were hurriedly whispered between them out there in the grove, in the middle of the plain, whereon only a few scattered date palms intercepted the view from the two enormous camps of armed men on the one side and the other. There was no time for more, but in that one glance from the eagle eye of the Roman, in that one whispered word, Elissa recognised how true and devoted he had been to her through all these years. She realised something more, and realised it with a terrible fear at her heart, namely, that she herself loved him still.

Scipio had only just time to note the piteous look upon his beloved's face when the situation was interrupted by Hannibal. He, advancing, and waiving the services of Elissa as interpreter, spoke in Latin, and spoke somewhat jocularly to begin with, for he seemed quite in one of his old merry moods.

"I salute thee, Scipio, and right pleased am I at last to behold the gallant young cockerel who hath sworn to clip for him the wings of the old cock of the farmyard. Give me thy hand, for whatever the upshot of this interview betwixt us may be, 'twill be historical, and it shall not be said that two such warriors as Scipio and Hannibal could meet and not take each other by the hand."

"I salute thee, and gladly take thy hand, oh Hannibal, and greatly doth the young cockerel appreciate such condescension on the part of the eagle."

And Scipio putting forth his hand, the two warriors clasped each other warmly with mutual respect.

"Now would I salute the lady Elissa," quoth Scipio, looking at Hannibal as for permission.

"Ay, salute her by all means—embrace her an thou wilt there is no harm in it this once, her father being present, for 'tis the only chance that ever thou shalt have, my gallant young friend, to embrace her whom thou didst so nearly succeed in making thy bride. It would, indeed, have been strange had I now been speaking with mine own son-in-law. Embrace her, I say, an she will permit it, and I, her father, do thank thee for all the most noble courtesies that thou didst show unto her whom the fortune of war had made thy prisoner, and further, for rescuing her from that scoundrel Philip. I would that thou wert a Carthaginian, Scipio, by all the gods I do."

But Scipio was not listening to Hannibal. He had thrown his arm around Elissa and was embracing her tenderly. She felt her knees trembling so that she could not have stood had it not been for his support. And once, once only, she returned his embrace ardently full on the lips. She knew it was a want of faith to Maharbal, but it could not be so very sinful, she thought, since her father, the sole witness of the action, permitted it, nay, encouraged it. Moreover, she felt that she owed Scipio something, ay, much indeed, and a kiss was little enough to give him after all that he had done for her.

Now, however, she sought to extricate herself from his embrace, while Hannibal looked on amused. Gently restraining her still, Scipio addressed her father.

"My lord Hannibal, thou hast said but now that I might have been thy son-in-law—give me but this dear lady in mine arms and we will make peace, a peace upon far less onerous terms than those that have been already proposed to the Carthaginian Senate."

"Nay, nay!" answered Hannibal, frowning. "I cannot make peace unless I fight thee first, or unless thou wilt own that thou darest not fight me lest thou should be beaten. I cannot give thee my daughter unless thou wilt agree to that, and to withdraw with all thy forces beyond the sea at once. Then thou canst go and take her with thee if thou wilt, but thou shalt not claim a single one of our ships, nor a single talent of our silver, but go recognising thyself in an inferiority. If thou dost love my daughter so greatly thou canst well do that, Scipio."

The young Roman's face flushed angrily as his arm fell from Elissa's waist, although he still clasped her hand.

"And what of the satisfaction to be given for the transports, which came ashore and were seized in time of truce? and what of the treacherous attack made upon the Roman ambassadors returning unsuspectingly from Carthage by sea to mine own camp near Utica? Is there to be no return, no punishment for those two great crimes against international law, against every law of honour? How couldst thou expect me, Hannibal, to go back to the Roman Senate with terms like these? They are impossible, and thou dost know it, and thou thyself wouldst despise me did I accept them."

"Ay," replied Hannibal, smiling grimly, "they are, perhaps, almost impossible, and I might possibly despise thee, yet that would not hurt thee much; but they are the only terms upon which I will give thee my daughter; it all depends upon how much thou dost desire her, young man."

"Then we must fight," cried Scipio, "and I must resign Elissa!"

He looked imploringly and sadly at her as he dropped her hand and faced her.

"Ay, we must fight, Scipio," replied Hannibal, "although, since great hath already been thy success in Spain, thou wouldst do better not to fight. For thy fame is now assured—it will be no greater shouldst thou win this battle; while shouldst thou be defeated all will be lost to thee. Look at me, see what an example I am of the reverses of fortune, and such reverses may be thine own to-morrow. Better, therefore, for thee to hearken unto my words. Leave Carthaginian soil and do not fight, and if thou leave at once thou canst take Elissa with thee."

"It cannot be," said Scipio sadly; "so fare thee well, dear Elissa." He kissed her hand gently, while her eyes were suffused with tears. Scipio continued: "Hannibal, I salute thee; to-morrow we will meet in mortal combat upon this plain, for, far from my submitting, thou it is who must submit to me unconditionally, or conquer me in the field."

"Farewell, Scipio, farewell, for to-morrow be it then; but thou art a headstrong young man, and mayst live to regret it. But I wish thee no ill, thou art a great general for one so young."

Turning, they left the palm grove upon opposite sides. Hannibal and Elissa, having regained their horses, rode back in silence. For the daughter had not at all been able to understand the father's line of conduct during the interview, and he did not youchsafe any information on the subject.

One point, however, she had grasped from his behaviour. It was that, so long as any object affecting the honour or advantage of Carthage was at stake, Hannibal had been perfectly ready to ride rough-shod over not only his own old prejudices against all and everything Roman, but also ready utterly to disregard Maharbal's happiness and possibly her own also. For that he had not during the late interview considered in the least his life-long friend Maharbal, to whom he yet was absolutely devoted, would have been patent to the simplest mind, among which class that of Elissa could hardly be reckoned.

But Hannibal had only been acting up to his own old theory and practice. The State before everything!

CHAPTER VII.

ZAMA.

THE following morning the opposing armies were drawn up in battle array as follows. Scipio placed in front the Hastati. with an interval between their maniples. The Principes came next, but these, contrary to the usual plan, were not placed so as to cover the intervals behind the Hastati. On the contrary, Scipio placed the maniples of the Principes directly behind the maniples of the spearmen in the front line. In the rear of these two lines he placed the Triarii, still leaving intervals. This he did to leave room for the enemy's elephants to pass between the various ranks. Caius Lælius, who was fighting on land now, commanded the Roman cavalry on the left wing; but on the right was the traitor Massinissa with all his Numidians. As Maharbal viewed, before the beginning of the battle, this noble force of Numidian cavalry massed on the Roman side, some four thousand men in all, he groaned aloud, and cursed his cousin by all the gods of Avernus. And this he did the more heartily, since he saw waving amid their ranks various standards and emblems which he well remembered seeing in his boyhood borne by the troops of his jovial uncle Syphax.

Hannibal arranged his men as follows. He covered the whole of his front with no less than eighty elephants. Behind the elephants came twelve thousand mercenaries of various tribes and nationalities—Celts and Ligurians, Mauretani and

Balearic Islanders. Behind these mercenaries came the native Libyans and Carthaginians, while in rear of all he placed the men upon whom he knew he could thoroughly rely. These were the men whom he had brought with him from Italy, whom he held in reserve more than an eighth of a mile in the rear. He placed his Numidian allies under Tychæus upon his left wing, while the Carthaginian cavalry were on the right. And now all was ready for the fray.

Before the battle actually commenced each of the commanders exhorted his men. Scipio bid them remember their former victories, to show themselves men of mettle worthy of their reputation and their country, and to understand that the effect of their victory would be not only to make themselves masters of Libya but to give them and their country the supremacy and undisputed lordship of the world. Thus he urged them to charge the enemy with the steady resolve to conquer or to die, and not to think of disgraceful flight under any circumstances.

Hannibal left the task of exhorting the men of the various forces to their own officers, with the exception of his own army of Italy. To them he addressed himself personally, and seeing what was the final result of the battle his speech was pathetic in the extreme. For he begged this army of Italy "to remember the many years during which they had been brothers in arms, and the number of battles they had fought with the Romans in which they had never been beaten or given the Romans even a hope of victory. Above all, putting all the countless minor successes aside, he charged them to remember the battle of the Trebia against Scipio's father, the battle in Etruria against Flaminius, and the battle of Cannæ against Æmilius, with none of which was the present struggle to be compared, whether in regard to the number or the excellence of the enemy's men. Let them only raise their eyes and look at the enemy's ranks, they would see that they were not merely fewer than those whom they had fought before, but as to their soldierly qualities there was no

comparison. The former Roman armies had come to the struggle untainted by memories of past defeats, while these men were the sons or the remnants of those sho had been beaten in Italy and fled before him again and again. They ought not, therefore, to undo the glory and fame of their former achievements, but to struggle with a firm and brave resolve to maintain their former reputation of invincibility."

Meanwhile the Numidians upon each side had become already engaged, and the plain was covered with the wheeling, charging, retiring and advancing bodies of cavalry. For the usual Numidian tactics were being pursued at this opening stage.

Now Hannibal gave the order for the elephants to charge. But many of these ferocious brutes, being only imperfectly trained, becoming frightened at the blaring of the Roman trumpets and horns, turned back again upon their own side and charged in among the allied Numidian cavalry fighting Massinissa upon the left wing, thus making it easy for that Numidian prince to rout his kinsman Tychæus thoroughly. The rest of the elephants did a considerable amount of damage to the Romans, but, owing to the spaces that Scipio had left between the maniples, down which many of them charged, not half the amount of damage that they ought to have done. And then, their bodies being full of darts, they ran away to the right, being driven off the field by further darts from the Roman cavalry in the Roman left wing. And the elephants being out of the way, Caius Lælius with all his horse charged the Carthaginian cavalry opposed to them and put them to flight, being ioined by Massinissa with his Numidians in the pursuit, which resulted in an utter rout.

And now the Roman infantry and the mercenaries of the Carthaginian front line charged each other, the Romans clashing with their swords upon their shields as they advanced, making a deafening and terrible din.

But the Celts and Mauretani, the Balearic Islanders and the Ligurians were not disconcerted either by these terrifying sounds or by the awe-inspiring sight of the huge sombre plumes waving above the helmets of the advancing Romans, making them appear about two feet greater in stature than ordinary men.

Raising in turn their own fierce war-cries, each in his own tongue, the mercenaries stood their ground nobly, and now every man, foot to foot, body to body, and shield to shield, cut and thrust and cut and thrust again, while as each man went down, his comrade stepped up from the rear and filled his vacant place. For long the issue of the combat between the front lines of the infantry remained uncertain, while men went down in hundreds, never to rise again.

At length, owing to the steadiness of the rear ranks of the Romans, who supported and encouraged their front rank men, while on the other hand, the cowardly Carthaginian levies, in rear of the mercenaries, began to waver and then to give way, the Romans began to gain ground. Thus the mixed bodies of foreign troops, being forced back by the weight of the Romans, and realising that they were being shamelessly deserted by their own side, turned their backs upon the Romans in front of them and joined them in falling upon the Carthaginian troops in their rear who had failed to support them.

And as Hannibal, who, with Maharbal, was remaining in rear with the reserves of the army of Italy, would by no means allow them to enter his ranks, but had them thrust back with the spear's point, these flying Carthaginians were now compelled, whether they would or no, to face to the front again and fight. This they did with the fury and courage of despair when it was too late, and, furiously charging their own mercenaries and the Romans combined, not only killed many of their own men, but threw the ranks of the hitherto successful Hastati into confusion; whereupon Scipio advanced his Principes of the second line to drive them back. By this time, however, the greater part of the mercenaries and the Carthaginians had either killed each other or been killed by the Hastati, who were also many of them dead or dying. The ground was now so utterly encumbered with wounded men and

corpses, and so slippery with blood, while arms and shields were tossed about everywhere in helpless confusion, that it was impossible for Scipio to advance in line formation his Principes, with their supports of the third line—that is, the Triarii against the main body of the army of Italy which was waiting under Hannibal for their advance.

Sounding a bugle, therefore, Scipio recalled such of the Hastati as had pursued beyond the zone where the bodies were lying thickest, and halted them there.

Then putting his Principes and Triarii into formations of files two or four deep, he threaded his way with them through the area where the dead and dying lay in heaps, and then re-formed all these fresh men into line again upon the other side, one line being as before in rear of the other.

He now caused such of the Hastati as had survived to fall in on the flanks of the new troops. These arrangements being made, he continued his advance.

Now Hannibal and Maharbal and all their veterans of many a hundred combats were thirsting for the fray, which they had been compelled, while inactive themselves, to witness for so long.

"Charge!" cried Hannibal.

"Charge!" re-echoed Maharbal.

"Charge!" repeated every one of the captains.

With a roar like the roar of the sea did the gallant remnant of the army of Italy advance and throw themselves upon the Romans with a fury that was terrible to behold. For the Romans, man for man, were no better, nay, not so good as their antagonists, and soon they began to fall back, slowly at first, then faster and faster, until at length they were falling backwards over the heaps of corpses they had, while advancing, just passed, the Carthaginians following, cutting down and slaying them with triumphant shouts of victory. It seemed as if the day were indeed lost for Scipio, and as if, despite the double misfortune of the stampede of the elephants and the cowardice of the Carthaginian levies, Hannibal would once

more prove the victor, upon Carthaginian even as on Roman soil.

But alas! what is this? From the left rear comes a thundering sound! it is the Numidian Massinissa returning from the pursuit of Tychæus and falling with his horsemen in a solid body upon the Carthaginian left flank and rear. And alas! what again is this? From the right rear also there comes a thundering sound as Caius Lælius, with his five thousand Roman cavalry, returning from the pursuit of the Carthaginian horse, falls upon the right flank and rear in turn.

Fight hard now and invoke the gods, ye soldiers of Hannibal! fight hard and strike home, for never again shall ye fight under your beloved leader!

Strike now, Maharbal! strike, Bostar! strike, Hanno! Hamilcar! Adherbal! Strike, all ye captains, for the dying lion's sake, and if ye must die, see that ye die as becometh your leader's reputation. A life for a life! die but yield not!

And so for want of cavalry, hemmed in upon all sides, even as Hannibal himself had hemmed the Romans in at Cannæ, did the army of Italy fall. Seeing at last that all was lost, hopelessly, irretrievably lost, Hannibal called together Maharbal and such of the other mounted officers as still lived, and forming them up into a little group, boldly charged, sword in hand, the surrounding cavalry on the right flank.

And as many of these were Roman soldiers, who had seen Hannibal and Maharbal at Cannæ and in many other encounters, they were filled with alarm at the sight of these two well-known warriors falling upon them. Therefore even in this, their very moment of victory, they fell back, terror-stricken, before the defeated lion and his giant companion. Thus they cut their way through, themselves unharmed, and riding off the battle-field, continued to retreat at full gallop for several miles before drawing rein, taking the route to Adrumentum, which had been left garrisoned. Thus ended the battle of

Bannibal's Baughter.

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Zama, which decided the fate of the world; and thus, for the first and the last time in his life, was Hannibal, the great, the hitherto invincible Hannibal, forced to fly before the face of an enemy.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

ALTHOUGH Elissa had seen the disposition of the troops, and even been present on the field of battle during the earliest stages of the combat, she had been spared the bitter humiliation of being an actual witness of her father's defeat.

For, with a view to possibly making use of his daughter later on in the case of certain eventualities, no sooner had Hannibal witnessed the disastrous stampede of the elephants than, determined at all events to secure her safety, he had started her off with a small escort of cavalry, with definite instructions to make all speed to Adrumentum, and to remain there until his own arrival, or until he should send for her to join him in Carthage itself. Alas! his own arrival in Adrumentum almost coincided with her own; for when it came to be a case of retreating, Hannibal retreated with as much rapidity as he had been previously wont to advance. For well he knew how quickly ill news can spread, and the absolute necessity of thoroughly securing the town before the garrison had been given sufficient time to become lukewarm or weak-hearted in his cause.

Once he had arrived upon the scene, he did not give anyone in the place time to think, so actively did he keep everyone employed working at the fortifications, drilling, bringing in provisions, and preparing for a siege, or generally occupied in some capacity or other which gave no time for treason or negligence.

Scipio, hearing soon of the state of security in which Hannibal had placed Adrumentum, and that, moreover, he had a large fleet lying off the place, determined not to invest that town. He marched to Carthage instead, and sending for the Suffetes and the Council of One Hundred, dictated to them the terms upon which alone he would make peace. And that they were now ten times more crushing than those which he had offered to Hannibal before the battle of Zama is not a matter for surprise. The astute Scipio, however, had only made such terribly onerous terms in order to be able, if necessary, to modify them in some degree. Therefore, when the Hundred humbly suggested that they would wish to send for Hannibal, to consult with him before agreeing to the terms of the treaty to be forwarded to Rome, the Roman General agreed at once. He sent word that Hannibal should have a safe conduct to Carthage, and requested the Senate to convey to him his wishes that his daughter should accompany him. For now he was in a position to demand compliance with his wishes, and he knew it.

Hannibal came from Adrumentum to Carthage by sea, accompanied by several ships, and anchored in the gulf exactly opposite the house on the Toenia, whence he had started with his father Hamilcar, when only a boy of nine, on his march along the Mediterranean to the Pillars of Hercules.

The house on the Toenia still belonged to him, and he disembarked there with his daughter and Maharbal, bitterness in his soul. No joyous demonstrations were there to welcome his return, although an enormous throng of people crowded on the port to obtain a sight of him. But he dismissed all those who would have speech of him, and having entered the house, wherein every passage and doorway was well known to him, he proceeded at once to the verandah on the first floor and looked out.

There was everything just as it had been upon that memorable occasion when his father Hamilcar had called him in upon the day of Matho's execution. Across the gulf the high hills of

the Hermæan Promontory were as dark and serrated as ever, the waters of the gulf itself were just as green and flecked with white foam as they had been then. The headland named Cape Carthage stood up as boldly as in days gone by, while between him and it lay the whole expanse of the city of Carthage, with its various temples to Moloch and Tanais in the distance, and the Forum in the foreground, all absolutely unchanged.

Hannibal moved round the balcony to the back of the house. Ay! there was the very fig-tree in the garden, under which he had been playing at war with his brothers Hasdrubal and Mago when his father had called him. Ah! the place might not have changed, but the people! What had become of them? His little brother Hasdrubal to begin with. not his head, all bloody and disfigured, after being cut off at the battle of the Metaurus, been brutally cast over the palisades into his own camp in Southern Italy, the first warning that he had of his brothers having crossed the Alps. And little Mago. who had been with Hasdrubal up in the fig-tree, where was he now? But recently dead, also killed like Hasdrubal by the And he, Hannibal, what was his own position? Romans. That of a disgraced man, disgraced by the Romans. Oh! how he hated them, how well he remembered his vow of hatred made with his father in the temple of Melcareth, of which he could espy the roof yonder. He yearned that for every Roman he had slain he might have slain ten, ay, might yet slay ten. And yet he was, he knew it, but here himself in Carthage solely on the sufferance of the Roman General Scipio, a young man who had vanquished him in war, and yet one who loved his daughter. Vainly now did Hannibal wish that he had allowed Elissa to pursue her voyage to Syracuse after the sea-fight at Locri, and fulfil her engagement to espouse this Scipio. For he well saw how much better it would have been for his country. He vainly wished also that he had not been so severe with Scipio during the interview before the battle of Zama. But how could he foretell that all the elephants were

going to stampede, or that the Carthaginian levies would prove such arrant cowards? He cursed the Carthaginians in his heart even more than the Romans when he thought of it all; but even while despising his fellow-countrymen he did not despise his native country, but loved it as much as ever.

Av! as he looked out and saw the olive groves, the pomegranate trees, the waving cornfields, the orange trees, the houses, the marble temples, and the green dancing sea beyond, he felt, indeed, that he loved his country as much as ever. But never could he have dreamed that the hour of his return could have been so bitter as the hour of anguish through which he was then passing. The mighty warrior thought of his father and the past, the long past of years and years ago. Then he laid his head upon the cold marble of the balustrade and wept-wept bitter tears at that very spot where, when a little boy, his father Hamilcar had bade him look well around and impress every land-mark, every headland, on his memory. For to this spot had he not returned disgraced!

The following morning Hannibal was informed that the Roman General Scipio wished to see him. He was obliged to repair to the palace in the suburbs which Scipio occupied. The latter strove to receive him in a manner not to hurt his dignity, for whatever he might feel for the other Carthaginian generals, for Hannibal himself he had the most unbounded respect. A long conference took place between Hannibal and Scipio in private upon the terms of the treaty about to be concluded, and Scipio made to him a suggestion, which was absolutely for his ears alone. It was to the following effect: Although, so he said, it was now utterly impossible for him, the Roman General, to modify the general terms of the treaty, which were, he owned, excessively severe—as, owing to the various acts of treachery on the part of the Carthaginians, they deserved to be-on one very important clause Scipio proposed a modification, but upon one condition only. This clause was that the Roman General and the Roman army should remain in Carthage at the expense of the Carthaginians until the whole of the war indemnity should be paid. This implied a Roman occupation of the country for at least twenty years to come, for so enormous was the indemnity required it could not be paid sooner. And after twenty years would they ever go? clause Scipio expressed to Hannibal his willingness to forego should the Carthaginian General give him even now his daughter in marriage. Under such circumstances Scipio pledged himself to evacuate Carthage with all his army, and sail for Sicily at once, leaving the care of protecting Roman interests to his ally Massinissa. And he vowed, by all the gods of Rome, that, should he once set foot on Sicilian soil in company with Hannibal's daughter, not only would he never again himself set foot upon Carthaginian soil, but that he would, to the utmost, discourage all future attempts upon Carthage from any Roman sources.

Hannibal was too astute to allow to appear upon his countenance the joy that he felt at this proposal. On the contrary, he made difficulties, talked of Elissa having changed her mind since the battle of Zama, and being, he now feared, thoroughly averse to Scipio. So well did he manage matters that Scipio was quite pleased when, almost as a favour, Hannibal consented in the end to consider the matter, and promised to speak to Elissa about it. The next morning, without acquainting Elissa or Maharbal with the subject of his conversation with Scipio, he requested them both to accompany him to the temple of the great god Melcareth, there to offer a solemn sacrifice at the same altar at which he had participated in the sacrifice with his father Hamilcar.

To the temple of Melcareth the three accordingly proceeded, and with the most serious and awful rites, offered up, under the instructions and guidance of an ancient priest, named Himilco, a most solemn and terrible sacrifice. This old man, Himilco, was the same who had been a priest in the temple in the time of Hannibal's youth, and had known him from a boy. He was now an old man eighty years of age, with a white beard that

reached down to his knees. His sanctity was most renowned, and he was looked upon, with reason, as a prophet by all the people. Under his guidance, for he had doubtless been somewhat, if only partly, prompted in his part by Hannibal, Maharbal and Elissa each made a most terrible vow, invoking. in case of failure to observe it, the most awful penalties of all the gods, to sacrifice themselves to the very last for the good of their country. The priest now caused them to plunge their arms up to the elbow in the blood of the sacrifice, and to vow solemnly to be guided, without question, by Hannibal alone as to what was to be considered for the good of their country; for the old man told them that the great god Melcareth was even at that very moment there present, and pervading all the space in the temple, and that the god had informed him that Hannibal alone was at this moment the arbiter of his country's fate. To disobey him would therefore be death here and awful damnation hereafter.

While the old man was impressively dictating to the pair the terms of the prescribed oath, the temple became dark. Sounds of rolling thunder were heard, and sudden flames flew from the altar to the roof, to be as suddenly extinguished. There could now be no doubt about the presence of the mighty god among them. They all fell upon their faces during his manifestation. At length Hannibal arose, and most solemnly declared that he had had a vision. That vision was that he had seen Elissa being joined in marriage to Scipio by the very high priest now before them. He further said that it had been revealed to him by the god in his vision that by that means alone could salvation come to unhappy Carthage, for upon Scipio being united to Elissa in marriage he would leave Carthage with all his army, and, he added, that it would be sufficient for Scipio to be accompanied by Elissa as far as the island of Sicily for the god to lay a spell upon him under which he would never return to Libyan soil.

Vainly did Maharbal declare to the high priest and to Hannibal that Elissa was his wife, and his alone. "Where are thy witnesses?" replied the high priest. "'Tis true the gods did allow a semblance of a marriage between ye, yet had not the priest my license. And, in token of their displeasure, that priest is already dead. A marriage without two witnesses is no legal marriage. Thou sayest that Hannibal was thy witness. One witness is not enough, oh Maharbal, in Carthage, whatever it may be in Spain or Italy. Moreover, think of thine awful oath. And is not the great god Melcareth speaking through Hannibal, whom ye have bound yourselves to obey?"

Now it was Elissa's turn to protest. With tears in her eyes she declared that she was indeed Maharbal's wife in very sooth, and could not now possibly give herself to any other man with honour.

"Think of thine oath!" firmly replied the aged priest, "and fear the anger of the immortal gods. 'Tis thou, Elissa, alone who canst save thy country; 'tis thou alone who canst withdraw the invader hence. Land with him but in Sicily and thou shalt be free; but dare thou but to breathe to him one word, and such an awful curse shall fall, not only upon thee and Maharbal, but upon thy country and thy father Hannibal, through thee, that ye had all better have died a thousand deaths on Zama's battle-field. Thou must be wed to Scipio by me. That is thy fate, for I, too, have had a vision. Ah! the terrible gods are now angry. Submit thyself, proud woman, to their immortal will."

At this moment the rolling thunder recommenced louder than before, while the lightning flashes from the altar were more frequent and more vivid. The scene in the temple was most awful and impressive, and all, including the aged priest, fell upon their faces.

Elissa hesitated no longer.

- "It is the will of the gods!" she muttered. "I must obey."
- "And thou?" inquired the high priest, turning to Maharbal.
- "If it be the will of the gods," he replied, "how can I resist? But I would that the gods were men that I might

fight this matter out with them at the point of my sword. I could soon show them who was in the right."

But, upon Maharbal uttering this awful blasphemy, such a peal of thunder shook the sacred fane that it seemed as though it would fall. He now fell upon his face, repentant, for he realised that he was failing in his vow, and it was indeed evident that the gods were angry.

Before they all left the temple in fear and trembling, both Maharbal and Elissa had humbly asked forgiveness of the gods for trying, against their immortal wishes, to set up their own weak wills, and had once more vowed, in order to appease them, to consider their country, and their country only. To confirm this feeling in both their hearts, the old priest informed them that it would be impious on their parts to consider themselves any longer as husband and wife, and that they must separate as such from that moment. For, whether she would or no, the salvation of her country depended upon Elissa marrying Scipio. Therefore, with sadness, these twain became once more strangers to each other at the temple door.

Ten days afterwards the marriage of Elissa with Scipio was solemnised in that very temple, when the Roman General declared that he recognised in the high priest him whom he had seen in his vision. He reminded his bride, with a happy smile, of what he had written to her; but Elissa's face wore in return no corresponding glow of happiness. For so terribly complex were her feelings that she knew she had no right to be happy, and, had it not been for her vow, would doubtless have taken her own life. Hannibal had, however, reminded her that in no wise could she benefit her country by so doing, and that her duty to Carthage lay in taking Scipio and his army away from its shores and completely beyond the seas. Once she had landed there her life was in her own hands. She would meanwhile have the satisfaction of having obeyed the mandates of the gods by sacrificing herself upon this occasion.

There were indeed reasons why she should not have married

Scipio, the man whom she really loved, and yet her terrible oath prevented her from revealing them to him. And Elissa felt it all the more deeply because she was at heart the very soul of honour.

Upon the same afternoon that the marriage took place did Scipio and all his army embark for Sicily. He himself and his pale but beautiful bride were accommodated upon a most luxurious and stately hexireme. Upon the voyage, which lasted two days, Scipio could not in any way account for the apparent state of alternate gaiety and despondency of his bride. She scarcely seemed to know what she was doing, and despite all the caresses that he showered upon her, ever seemed to shudder and draw back if inadvertently she had herself returned but one of them.

Upon landing at Libybæum in Sicily, no sooner had she disembarked, than, falling on her knees before him, Elissa presented Scipio with the hilt of a dagger, and, with many bitter tears, told him all, absolutely without reserve, beseeching him to slay her on the spot.

At first his fury was so great that he was even about to do so, but then he mastered himself completely, and his wonted nobility and greatness of character did not desert him even in this awful crisis.

Scipio dashed the dagger to the ground violently.

"Nay!" he exclaimed, "I will not slay thee, Elissa, for thou art but like myself, the victim of a cruel, a pitiless fate, and not thyself to blame. May the gods protect thee in the future as in the past, and guide thee to do that which is right. As for me, I do forgive thee, for now I know the truth indeed, which is that thou dost love me most. But to mine enemy Maharbal do I owe my life thrice over. To him, therefore, will I return two lives—thine and that of his unborn child. Farewell, Elissa!—farewell for ever, beloved!"

He kissed her tenderly on the forehead, and thus they parted, to meet no more in this world, for Scipio sent her back to Carthage that same day.

Hannibal's Daugbter.

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But Elissa never held up her head again; she pined, and grew paler day by day. And when at the expiration of the half-year her son was born, she died in giving him birth.

Thus perished in all the bloom of her beauty one who was ever a martyr to duty and to her country's cause, Elissa, Hannibal's daughter.

THE END.



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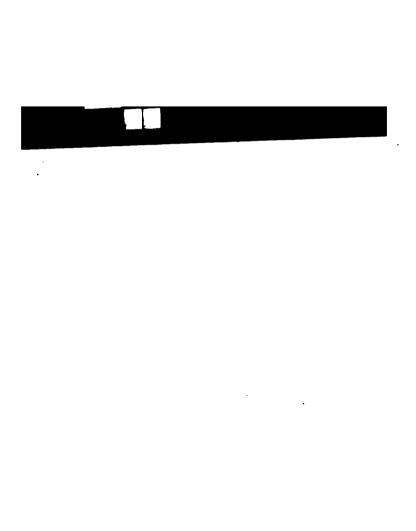
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